TAGORE BIRTHDAY NUMBER

EDITED BY

K. R. KRIPALANI

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FOREWORD

In undertaking the present adventure of publishing, on the occasion of the 8oth birthday of Rabindranath Tagore, a Special Number of this Journal, the editor took upon himself a responsibility for which neither his competence nor his experience qualified him. Enthusiasm made him bold and encouraged the hope that the appeal of the occasion would not fail in response from the many competent writers and scholars, whose co-operation alone can make such an undertaking worth while. That hope has been, to a large extent, justified ; and if the readers discover any merit in the present Volume, I trust they will give the credit to where it is due, namely to the talented and learned contributors who have so readily and generously responded to my invitation. The time at their disposal was very limited. Owing to the Poet's recent serious illness, we could not finally make up our mind and announce the decision till late in March last. The publication of the Number has therefore been delayed for which I offer my apologies. For this as well as many other shortcomings which they may notice in going through the following pages, I crave their indulgence. To the learned contributors and to my esteemed colleagues at Santiniketan who had generously placed their advice and co-operation at my disposal, I acknowledge my deep gratitude.

As far as possible the articles have been so written and arranged as to enable the reader to gain a better understanding of the many-sided achievement of India's greatest creative genius. The bibliography at the end of the Volume will, it is hoped, be useful to all those who are interested in a serious study of the Poet's life and work, while several articles dealing with particular aspects of his thought and literary expression may help the reader in such study.

Most of the articles are by distinguished scholars whose

embody it! "He is a master, a master!" cried Turgeniev, at a loss for adequate words to describe the genius of Tolstoy. Even so one is dumb-founded with a mixed feeling of wonder and joy at the magnificent outflow of Rabindranath's creative activity.

Versatility, vitality, unceasingly creating new modes of expression, "as old and new at once as nature's self"—this is the outstanding impression of Rabindranath's genius. These are qualities which by themselves are sufficient to place him in the rank of the world's greatest masters of creative expression. But he is more than the mere maker of beautiful forms, more than the mere sāki of the spirit's immortal wine. He is a great teacher as well, a great lover of humanity, a great crusader on the side of truth and justice. Like Plato he has brought heaven and earth nearer each other, but, unlike Plato, the earth he loves is the habitation of all mankind and not of one particular race or tribe to which he happens to belong. The religion he preaches is the religion of man, the renunciation he extols is not of this world but of those baser passions of cupidity and hatred which distort man's life on this planet, the freedom he fights for is not the freedom of one people to exploit another, but the freedom of the human personality from all that stifles it, whether it be the tyranny of an external organisation or the worse tyranny of man's own blind passion for power. All his life he has pleaded and striven for social justice, for the right of the poor to material well-being, of the citizen to self-government, of the ignorant to knowledge, of the child to natural development, of the woman to equal dignity with man. The world has reason to be grateful to a writer whose genius has been so consistently dedicated to the good of humanity. A great Gardener of the spirit's finest flowering, a great Fruit-gatherer of his people's culture, a great Sentinel of human rights and values,—may many more birthdays find him still active and resplendent!

THE EDITOR

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By Ramananda Chatterjee

On the twenty-fifth of Baisākh of the Bengali year, corresponding to the eighth of May, 1941, Rabindranath Tagore completes eighty years of his life. Lives eighty years long, though not common, are not extremely rare either. But it is not the length of a life but its quality that really matters. We read in the Yoga-Vāsishtha :

> *Taravopi hi jīvanti, jīvanti mṛgapakshiṇaḥ,*
> *Sa jīvati mano yasya mananena hi jīvati.*
>
> "Plants also live, and birds and beasts live ;
> But he lives (truly) whose mind lives by thinking."

Rabindranath Tagore's life has been eminently such a life of thought and of action in accordance with his thought.

Within the compass of a magazine article it is not possible to give an adequate idea of the genius, personality and achievements of such a person,—they are so great and varied. But an attempt is made in the following pages to give some idea, however inadequate, of his personality and varied achievements, as a humble token of the participation of the writer in the festive functions of the occasion.

The poet writes in one of his poems :

> Do not in this way see from the outside—
> Do not look for me in externals :
> You will not find me in my sorrow and my joy,
> Do not seek in my bosom for my anguish,
> You will not find me in my joy,
> The poet is not where you seek him :
> You will not find the poet in his life-story.[1]

1 English translations of the Bengali originals quoted in this article are by the writer. Where the translation is the Poet's own, reference is made to the English publication where it appears.

Then there is that unclassifiable work *Pancha Bhuter Diary* ("Diary of the Five Elements"), imaginary conversations which are like a transcript of his own talks in Bengali. He is the creator of some dance-plays, too. The aggregate of what he has done for the Bengali language and literature exceeds what any other author has done. It is remarkable that in the decade following 1930, during the latter part of which he has been twice seriously ill, he has produced some three dozen new books, including primers, nursery rhymes, nonsense verses and picture books for children, and several dance-dramas. Two books of poems and a book of reminiscences of his boyhood days have appeared during his present period of convalescence. Two more are to be shortly issued. Many new songs have been composed during this period. The articles and essays written during this period have not yet been published in book form.

All this he has been able to do, not merely because he is a man of genius but also because he is a scholar whose range of reading is very extensive and varied. In addition to what he has read in Bengali and Sanskrit, and of English literature proper and of the literature of other countries in English translations, he has read English books, as a glance at his reading shelves reveals, on the following and other subjects :

> Farming, philology, history, medicine, astro-physics, geology, bio-chemistry, entomology, co-operative banking, sericulture, indoor decorations, production of hides, manures, sugar-cane and oil, pottery, looms, lacquer-work, tractors, village economics, recipes for cooking, lighting, drainage, calligraphy, plant-grafting, meteorology, synthetic dyes, parlour-games, Egyptology, road-making, incubators, wood-blocks, elocution, stall-feeding, jiu-jitsu, printing.

Milton wrote in his day, when knowledge was neither so vast nor so varied and specialized as today, that the poet should take all knowledge as his province. Rabindranath Tagore's ideal has been similar to that of Milton.

Had he not been famous as a great poet and prose-writer, he would have become famous for the range and variety of his

studies. Yet such is the genuine humility of the poet that in a poem written the other day and translated as *The Great Symphony*, he declares :

> How little I know of this mighty world.
> Myriad deeds of men, cities, countries,
> rivers, mountains, seas and desert wastes,
> so many unknown forms and trees
> have remained beyond my range of awareness.
> Great is life in this wide Earth
> and small the corner where my mind dwells.

An impression seems still to prevail in some quarters that Rabindranath Tagore's genius was not recognized even in Bengal before he won the Nobel Prize. It is quite wrong. On his completing the fiftieth year of his life, all classes, all professions and ranks, the representatives of the spirituality, character, culture and public spirit of Bengal, combined to do him honour in the Calcutta Town Hall in a way in which no other author in Bengal had been honoured before, or, has been since. There were also other magnificent celebrations of the occasion. And all this took place before the Nobel Prize in literature had been awarded to him. The fact is, he became famous outside Bengal after winning the Nobel Prize, but was already famous here before that event.

Some works of his have been translated into more languages of the world than those of any other modern Indian author or perhaps of any other author of the world. Many works and some kinds of works of his in Bengali, e. g., those which are full of humour and wit, have not yet been translated into English or thence into other Western and Eastern languages. In the translations of the works which have been translated, much, if not all, of the music, the suggestiveness, the undefinable associations clustering round Bengali words and phrases, and the aroma, racy of Bengal and India, of the original have been lost. No doubt, the translations of the poems and dramas, particularly when done by the poet himself, have often

gained in directness, in the beauty and sublimity of simplicity, and in the music and strength belonging to the English or other language of the translations. But admitting all this, one is still constrained to observe that, for a correct estimate and full appreciation of Rabindranath's intellectual and literary powers, his gifts and genius, it is necessary to study both his original works in Bengali and their English translations, as well as his original works in English, like *Personality*, *Sādhana*, *The Religion of Man*, etc. A study of his works in their Bengali originals is essential for a correct estimate of his genius and literary achievement.

His hymns and sermons and some of his other writings on spiritual subjects let us unconsciously into the secret of his access to the court of the King of kings, nay to His very presence, and of his communion with Him. His devotional songs and other writings in a spiritual vein have brought solace and healing to many a soul in travail and anguish.

Insight and imagination are his magic wands, by whose power he roams where he will and leads his readers, too, thither. In his works Bengali literature has outgrown its provincial character and has become fit to fraternize with world literature. Currents of universal thought and spirituality have flowed into Bengal through his writings.

In philosophy he is not a system-builder. He is of the line of our ancient religio-philosophical teachers whose religion and philosophy are fused components of one whole. His position as a philosophical thinker was recognized by his selection to preside and deliver the presidential address at the First Indian Philosophical Congress in 1925, and also when he was asked to deliver the Hibbert Lectures, which appeared subsequently as *The Religion of Man*. Both his poetry and prose embody his philosophy.

The theme of *The Religion of Man* has been thus explained by the Author :

> India has ever nourished faith in the truth of the Spiritual Man, for whose realization she has made in the past innumerable

experiments, sacrifices and penances, some verging on the grotesque and the abnormal. But the fact is she has never ceased in her attempt to find it, even though at the tremendous cost of losing material success. Therefore I feel that the true India is an idea, and not a mere geographical fact. I have come into touch with the idea in far-away places of Europe, and my loyalty was drawn to it in persons who belonged to countries different from mine. India will be victorious when this idea wins the victory—the idea of 'The Infinite Personality, whose light reveals itself through the obstruction of Darkness.' Our fight is against this darkness. Our object is the revealment of the light of this Infinite Personality of Man. This is not to be achieved in single individuals, but in one grand harmony of all human races. The darkness of egoism which will have to be destroyed is the egoism of the Nation. The idea of India is against the intense consciousness of the separateness of one's own people from others, which inevitably leads to ceaseless conflicts. Therefore, my own prayer is, let India stand for the co-operation of all peoples of the world.

My religion is the reconciliation in my own individual being of the Super-personal Man, the Universal human spirit. This is the theme of my Hibbert Lectures.

Rabindranath is not simply a literary man, though his eminence as an author is such that for a foreigner the Bengali language would be worth learning for studying his writings alone.

It does not in the least detract from his work as a musician to admit that he is not an *ustād* or "expert" in music, as that term is usually understood, though he was trained in Indian classical music. He has such a sensitive ear that he appears to live in two worlds—one, the world of visible forms and colours, and another, which one may call the world of sound-forms and sound-colours. His musical genius and instinct are such that his achievement in that art has extorted the admiration of many "experts". This is said not with reference only to his numerous hymns and patriotic and other songs and the tunes to which he has himself set them, or to his thrilling, sweet, soulful and rapt singing in different periods of his life, but also in

connection with what he has done for absolute music. He is not only the author of the words of his songs, possessed of rare depth of meaning and suggestiveness and power of inspiration, but is also the creator of what may be called new airs and tunes.

It is said that among European musicians Franz Peter Schubert holds the record for the number of songs composed by him. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Eleventh Edition) says of Schubert that "He was the greatest songwriter who ever lived." His songs "number over 600, excluding scenas and operatic pieces."

According to a rough estimate Rabindranath Tagore has composed some 2,000 songs, all of which he has set to music. These do not include his dance-plays and operas. He continues to compose new songs, never repeating himself.

About fifteen years ago, I had the good fortune to be present at some of the meetings in Germany and Czechoslovakia where he lectured and recited some of his poems. To such a meeting at Dresden I have briefly referred in my article on "Rabindranath Tagore at Dresden." His recitations were such that even though the poems recited were in a language not understood by the vast majority of the audience, he had to repeat them several times at their earnest request. Those who have heard him read his addresses and deliver his extempore speeches and sermons in Bengali know how eloquent he could be as a speaker, though his delivery in years past was often so rapid and his sentences branched out in such bewildering luxuriance as to make him the despair of reporters. No wonder, he shines also as a conversationalist. His humorous and witty repartees and his improvised playful poems are unrivalled.

He is a master and a consummate teacher of the histrionic art. Those who have seen him appear in leading roles in many of his plays have experienced how natural and elevating acting can be. From the prime of his manhood upwards he has been in the habit of reading out his new poems, discourses, short

stories, plays and novels to select circles. On such occasions, too, his elocution and histrionic talents come into play.

If it is true that the credit of reviving the performance of music in public by respectable women goes to the Brahmo Samaj, that credit belongs in great part to the Tagore family and Rabindranath Tagore. They have also made it possible for girls and women of respectable classes to act in public. The poet has also rehabilitated in Bengal dancing by respectable girls and women as a means of self-expression and innocent amusement and play. The new dances he has created, in which he has personally trained many girl students of Santiniketan, are entirely free from the voluptuousness and worse features of many prevalent dances. In the course of a letter written to His Excellency President Tai Chi Tao on the significance of artistic education in Visva-bharati, the Poet says :

> Tonight we shall present before you another aspect of our ideal where we seek to express our inner self through song and dance. Wisdom, you will agree, is the pursuit of completeness ; it is in blending life's diverse work with the joy of living. We must never allow our enjoyment to gather wrong associations by detachment from educational life ; in Santiniketan, therefore, we provide our own entertainment, and we consider it a part of education to collaborate in perfecting beauty. We believe in the discipline of a regulated existence to make our entertainment richly creative.
>
> In this we are following the ancient wisdom of China and India ; the *Tau*, or the True Path, was the golden road uniting arduous service with music and merriment. Thus in the hardest hours of trial you have never lost the dower of spiritual gaiety which has refreshed your manhood and attended upon your great flowerings of civilisation. Song and laughter and dance have marched along with rare loveliness of Art for centuries of China's history. In India Sarasvati sits on her lotus throne, the goddess of Learning and also of Music, with the Golden Lyre—the *Veena*—on her lap. In both countries, the arcana of light have fallen on divinity of human achievements. And that is Wisdom.

Tagore's patriotic songs are characteristic. They are refined

and restrained, and free from bluff, bravado, bluster and boasting. Some of them twine their tendrils round the tenderest chords of our hearts, some enthrone the Motherland as the Adored in the shrine of our souls, some sound as a clarion call to our drooping spirits filling us with hope and the will to do and dare and suffer, some call on us to have the lofty courage to be in the minority of one ; but in none are heard the clashing of interests, the warring passions of races, or the echoes of old, unhappy, far-off historic strifes and conflicts. In many of those written during the stirring times of the Swadeshi agitation in Bengal more than three decades ago, the poet spoke out with a directness which is missed in many of his writings, though not in the *Kathā-o-Kāhinī* ballads, which make the heart beat thick and fast and the blood tingle and leap and course swiftly in our veins.

To Andrews Fletcher of Salton, a famous Scottish patriot, is attributed the authorship of the observation that "if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation." He is generally quoted, however, as having said so with respect to songs. Both ballads and songs have much to do with the making of nations. Rabindranath's songs and ballads—the former to a greater extent than the latter, have been making and shaping Bengal to no small extent and will continue to mould the character of her people, literate and illiterate, town-dwellers and village-folk, and their culture and civilization.

But it is not merely as a maker of songs that he has taken part in the Swadeshi movement. His socio-political addresses, the annual fairs suggested or organized by him, are part of the same national service. He has worked earnestly for the revival of weaving and other arts and crafts of the country, particularly village arts and crafts, and contributed his full share to making education in India Indian as well as human and humane in the broadest sense, and to the sanitation, reconstruction, reorganization and rejuvenation of villages. Even official reports have

praised him as a model landlord for his activities in these directions in his estate.

His scheme of constructive "non-co-operation", or, properly speaking, of constructive self-reliance, in education, revival of village crafts, village reconstruction, etc., as outlined in some of his writings and addresses more than thirty years ago, was part of his Swadeshi-movement politics. It is to be found in his lecture on Swadeshi Samaj, deliverd on 22nd July, 1904, and in his presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Pabna, 1908. The "No-Tax" movement adumbrated in his plays *Prāyaschitta* ("Expiation") and *Paritrān* ("Deliverance") and the joyful acceptance of suffering and chains by its hero, Dhananjaya Bairāgi, a Mendicant, embody his idea of what the attitude of leaders and the rank and file should be on such occasions. Both plays are dramatic renderings of an earlier work, a historical romance named *Bou-Thākuranīr Hāt* ("The Bride-Queen's Market"), published in 1884. Of these plays *Prāyaschitta* is the earlier one, published in May, 1909. Translations of some portions of its dialogues and of some of its songs are given below.

Dhananjaya Bairāgi, a Sannyāsi, and a number of villagers of Madhabpur, going to the King :

THIRD VILLAGER : What shall we say, Father, to the King ?

DHANANJAYA : We shall say, "we won't pay tax."

THIRD VILLAGER : If he asks, "why won't you ?"

DHANANJAYA : We will say, "if we pay you money starving our children and making them cry, our Lord will feel pain. The food which sustains life is the sacred offering dedicated to the Lord ; for he is the Lord of life. When more than that food—a surplus, remains in our houses, we pay that to you (the King) as tax, but we can't pay you tax deceiving and depriving the Lord."

FOURTH VILLAGER : Father, the King will not listen.

DHANANJAYA : Still, he must be made to hear. Is he so unfortunate because he has become King that the Lord will not allow him to hear the truth ? We will force him to hear.

FIFTH VILLAGER : Worshipful Father, he (the King) will win, for he has more power than we.

DHANANJAYA : Away with you, you monkeys ! Is this a sample of your intelligence ? Do you think, the defeated have no power ? Their power stretches up to heaven, do you know ?

SIXTH VILLAGER : But, Father, we were far from the King, we could have saved ourselves by concealment,—we shall now be at the very door of the King. There will be no way of escape left if there be trouble.

DHANANJAYA : Look here, Panchkari, leaving things unsettled in this way by shelving them, never bears good fruit. Let whatever may happen, happen ; otherwise the finale is never reached. There is peace when the extremity is reached.

Let us take next what passes between Dhananjaya, the Sannyāsi, leader of the people, and King Pratāpāditya.

PRATAPADITYA : Look here Bairagi, you can't deceive me by this sort of (feigned) madness of yours. Let us come to business. The people of Madhabpur have not paid their taxes for two years. Say, will you pay ?

DHANANJAY : No, Maharaj, we will not.

PRATAPADITYA : Will not ? Such insolence !

DHANANJAYA : We can't pay you what is not yours.

PRATAPADITYA : Not mine !

DHANANJAYA : The food that appeases our hunger is not yours. This food is His who has given us life. How can we give it to you ?

PRATAPADITYA : So it is you who have told my subjects not to pay taxes ?

DHANANJAYA : Yes, Maharaj, it is I who have done it. They are fools, they have no sense. They want to part with all they have for fear of the tax-gatherer. It is I who tell them, "Stop, stop, don't you do such a thing. Give up your life only to Him who has given you life (that is, die only at the Lord's bidding, but not by depriving yourselves of the food which He has given you) ;—don't make your King guilty of killing you (by allowing him to take from you the food which is necessary for keeping your bodies and souls together)."

I do not wish to add to the length of this article by quoting similar passages from the play *Paritrān*, based on the same story. Let me take some other passages from *Prāyaschitta*, the other play.

PRATAPADITYA : Look here, Bairagi, you have neither hearth nor home ; but these villagers are all householders—why do you want to lead them into trouble ? (To the villagers) I say, you fellows all go back to Madhabpur. (To Dhananjaya) You, Bairagi, have to remain here (that is, he will be arrested and jailed).

VILLAGERS : No, that can't be so long as we are alive.

DHANANJAYA : Why can't that be ? You are still lacking in sense. The King says "Bairagi, you remain." You say, "No that can't be." But has the luckless Bairagi come floating like flotsam (that is, is he not master of himself with a will of his own) ? Is his remaining here or not to be settled only by the King and yourselves ?

(*Sings*)

Whom have you kept by saying 'he remains' ?
When will your order take effect ?
Your force will not endure, brother,
That alone will endure which is fit to endure.
Do what you please—
Keep or kill by bodily force—
But only that will be borne which He will bear
Whom all blows strike.
Plenty of coins you have,
No end of ropes and cords,
Many horses and elephants,—
Much you have in this world.
You think, what you want will happen,
That you make the world dance to your tune ;
But you will see on opening your eyes,
That also happens which doesn't usually happen.

(ENTER MINISTER)

PRATAPADITYA : You have come at the nick of time. Keep this Bairagi captive here. He must not be allowed to go back to Madhabpur.

MINISTER : Maharaj—

PRATAPADITYA : What ! The order is not to your liking ;—is it ?

UDAYADITYA : (Pratapaditya's son and heir)—Maharaj, the Bairagi is a saintly man.

VILLAGERS : Maharaj, this cannot be borne by us ! Maharaj, evil will follow from it.

DHANANJAYA : I say, you all go back. The order has been given, I must stay with the King for a few days; the fellows can't bear this (good luck of mine) !

VILLAGERS : Did we come to petition His Majesty for this ? We are not to have the Yuvaraj (heir-apparent), and are to lose you, too, to boot ?

DHANANJAYA : My body burns to hear what you say : What do you mean by saying you will lose me ? Did you keep me tied up in a corner of your loin-cloths ? Your business is done. Away with you now !

Owing to an accidental conflagration, the jail where Dhananjaya was imprisoned is reduced to ashes. He has come out.

DHANANJAYA : Jai, Maharaj, Jai ! You did not want to part with me, but from where nobody knows, Fire has come with a warrant for my release ! But how can I go without telling you ? So I have come to take your order.

PRATAPADITYA (sarcastically) : Had a good time ?

DHANANJAYA : Oh I was so happy. There was no anxiety. All this is His hide-and-seek. He thought I could not catch Him concealed in the prison. But I caught Him, tight in my embrace ; and then no end of laughter and songs unending. I have spent the days in great joy—I shall remember my Brother Prison.

(*Sings*)

O my chains, embracing you I enjoyed
The music of your clanking.
You kept me delighted, breaking my pride.
Playing games with you,
The days passed in joy and sorrow.
You encircled my limbs
With priceless jewellery.
I am not angry with you,—
If anybody is to blame, it is I,
Only if there be fear in my mind,
I regard you as terrible.
All night long in the darkness
You were my comrade.
Remembering that kindness of yours
I salute you.

PRATAPADITYA : What is it you say, Bairagi ! What for were you so happy in prison ?

DHANANJAYA : Maharaj, like your happiness in your kingdom was my joy in prison. What was lacking (there) ? (The Lord) can give *you* happiness, but can't He give *me* any joy ?

PRATAPADITYA : Where will you go now ?

DHANANJAYA : The road.

PRATAPADITYA : Bairagi, it strikes me at times that your way is preferable ; my kingdom is no good.

DHANANJAYA : Maharaj, the kingdom, too, is a path. Only, one has to be able to walk aright. He who knows it to be a path (to the goal), he is a real wayfarer ; we sannyasis are nothing in comparison with him. Now then, if you permit, out I go for the nonce.

PRATAPADITYA : All right, but don't go to Madhabpur.

DHANANJAYA : How can I promise that ? When (the Lord) will take me anywhere, who is there to say nay ?

All the passages quoted above are free translations from the original. It is also to be noted that the poet has named the leader of the people in these two plays "Dhananjaya", which means, "He who has conquered (the desire for) riches." One may take that to indicate the poet's idea of the essential qualification of a leader of the people.

As the poet has denounced Nationalism in his book of that name, taking the word to mean that organized form of a people which is meant for its selfish aggrandizement at the expense of other peoples by foul, cruel and unrighteous means, and as he is among the chief protagonists of what is, not quite appropriately, called Internationalism, his profound and all-sided love of the Motherland, both as expressed in words and as manifested in action, has sometimes not been evident perhaps to superficial observers. But those who know him and his work and the literature he has created, know that he loves his land

with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

His penetrating study of, and insight into, the history of India and Greater India have strengthened this love. Especially noteworthy is his essay on the course of India's history.

The origin of what is called his Internationalism has sometimes been traced to his revealing and disappointing experiences during the Anti-partition and Swadeshi movement of Bengal of the first decade of this century. Such experiences are not denied. But his love of the whole of humanity and interest in their affairs are traceable even in the writings of his boyhood when he was in his teens. And in maturer life, this feature of his character found distinct expression in a poem, named "Prabāsi", written more than forty years ago, which begins with the declaration that his home is in all lands, his country in all countries, his close kindred in all homes there, and that he is resolved to win this country, this home and these kindred.

In his patriotism there is no narrowness, no chauvinism, no hatred or contempt of the foreigner. He believes that India has a message and a mission, a special work entrusted to her by Providence.

He writes in "Our Swadeshi Samaj" :

> The realization of unity in diversity, the establishment of a synthesis amidst variety—that is the inherent, the *sanātana*, Dharma of India. India does not admit difference to be conflict, nor does she espy an enemy in every stranger. So she repels none, destroys none, she abjures no methods, recognizes the greatness of ideals, and she seeks to bring them all into one grand harmony.

Again :

> In the evolving History of India, the principle at work is not the ultimate glorification of the Hindu or any other race. In India, the history of humanity is seeking to elaborate a specific ideal to give to general perfection a special form which shall be for the gain of all humanity ; nothing less than this is its end and aim. And in the creation of this ideal type, if Hindu, Moslem or Christian should have to submerge the aggressive part of their individuality, that may hurt their sectarian pride, but will not be accounted a loss by the standard of Truth and Right.

Tagore's ideal is the same as that of Rammohun Roy, who, he says, "did not assist India to repair her barriers, or to keep cowering behind them,—he led her out into the freedom of Space and Time, and built for her a bridge between the East and the West."

This statement of India's ideal is supported by Mr. C. E. M. Joad in the following passage in his book, *The Story of Indian Civilization*, published, much later, recently :

> Whatever the reason, it is a fact that India's special gift to mankind has been the ability and willingness of Indians to effect a synthesis of many different elements both of thoughts and of peoples, to create, in fact, unity out of diversity.

Rabindranath is above all sectarianism, communalism and racialism, as is evident from his poem "Bhārata-Tirtha", of which a few lines are translated below :

No one knows at whose call
    How many streams of humanity
Came from where, in irresistible currents,
And lost their identity in this (India's) ocean (of men).
Here Aryan, here non-Aryan,
    Here Dravid and Cheen,
Hordes of Saka, Huna, Pathan and Mughal
Became merged in one body.
The door has opened in the West today,
All bring presents from there,
They will give and take, mix and mingle,
    Will not turn back—
In this India's great
    Human ocean's shores.

Come O Aryan, come, non-Aryan,
    Hindu-Mussalman,
Come, come today, you English,
    Come, come, O Christian.
Come, Brahmana, purifying your mind,

Clasp the hands of all,
Come, O ye outcasted and 'fallen',
May the burden of all ignominy
Be taken off your backs.
Come, hasten to the Mother's anointing ;
For the auspicious vessel has not yet been filled
With water from all shrines,
Purified by the touch of all
(castes, creeds and classes).

The poet has never denied that other countries, too, may have their own special messages and missions. He does not dismiss the West with a supercilious sneer, but respects it for its spirit of enquiry, its science, its strength and will to face martyrdom in the cause of truth, freedom and justice (now, alas ! gone to sleep), its acknowledgement and acceptance of the manness of the common man (now also, alas ! not manifest), and its activities for human welfare, and wishes the East to take what it should and can from the West, not like a beggar without patrimony or as an adopted child, but as a strong and healthy man may take wholesome food from all quarters and assimilate it. This taking on the part of the East from the West, moreover, is the reception of stimulus and impetus, more than, or rather than, learning, borrowing, aping or imitation. The West, too, can derive advantage from contact with the East, different from the material gain of the plunderer and the exploiter. The study of his writings and utterances leaves us with the impression that the West can cease to dominate in the East only when the latter, fully awake, self-knowing, self-possessed and self-respecting, no longer requires any blister or whip and leaves no department of life and thought largely unoccupied by its own citizens.

His hands reach out to the West and the East, to all humanity, not as those of a suppliant, but for friendly grasp and salute. He is, by his literary works and travels, among the foremost reconcilers and uniters of races and continents. He has renewed India's cultural connection with Japan, China, Siam, Islands-India, Iran and Iraq by his visits to those lands. His

extensive travels in Europe and America also have established cultural and friendly relations with the *peoples* of those lands. The Greater India Society owes its inception to his inspiration.

In spite of the cruel wrongs inflicted on India by the British nation, and whilst condemning such wrong-doing unsparingly, he has never refrained from being just and even generous in his estimate of the British people. Therefore it is that his disillusion has been so agonizing, as revealed in his eightieth birthday pronouncement on the Crisis of Civilization.

It will be recalled that he was the first to publicly condemn the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, and that he gave up his knighthood in protest.

His politics are concerned more with the moulding of society and character-building than with the more vocal manifestations of that overcrowded department of national activity. Freedom he prizes as highly and ardently as the most radical politician, but his conception of freedom is full and fundamental. To him the chains of inertness, cowardice and ignorance, of selfishness and pleasure-seeking, of superstition and lifeless custom, of the authority of priestcraft and letter of scripture, constitute our bondage no less than the yoke of the stranger, which is largely a consequence and a symptom. He prizes and insists upon the absence of external restraints. But this does not constitute the whole of his idea of freedom. There should be inner freedom also, born of self-sacrifice, enlightenment, self-purification and self-control. This point of view has largely moulded his conception of the Indian political problem and the best method of tackling it. He wishes to set the spirit free, to give it wings to soar, so that it may have largeness of vision and a boundless sphere of activity. He desires that fear should be cast out. Hence his politics and his spiritual ministrations merge in each other. Quite appropriately and characteristically have the lips of such a poet uttered the prayer :

> Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;
> Where knowledge is free ;

> Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls ;
> Where words come out from the depth of truth ;
> Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;
> Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;
> Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever widening thought and action—
> Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake. (*Gitanjali*)

Age and bodily infirmities have not made him a reactionary and obscurantist. His spirit is ever open to new light. He continues to be a progressive social reformer. His intellectual powers are still at their height. His latest poetic creations of the month—perhaps one may sometimes say, of the week or the day—do not betray any dimness of vision, any lack of inspiration or fertility ; nor are there in any of them signs of repetition. He continues to be among our most active writers. This is for the joy of creation and self-expression and fraternal giving, as he loves his kind, and human intercourse is dear to his soul. His ceaseless and extensive reading in very many diverse subjects, including some out-of-the-way sciences and crafts, and his travels in many continents enable him to establish ever new intellectual and spiritual contacts, to be abreast of contemporary thought, to keep pace with its advance and with the efforts of man to plant the flag of the master who knows in the realms of the unknown—himself being one of the most sanguine and dauntless of intellectual and spiritual prospectors and explorers.

When Curzon partitioned Bengal against the protests of her people, the poet threw himself heart and soul into the movement for the self-realization and self-expression of the people in all possible ways. But when popular resentment and despair led to the outbreak of terrorism, he was the first to utter the clearest note of warning, to assert that Indian nationalism should not stultify and frustrate itself by recourse to such violence. Such warnings have been given by him on other occasions, too.

Though he has had nothing to do with active politics for decades, he has not hesitated to give the nation the advantage of inspiring messages and outspoken pronouncements from the presidential chair at meetings on momentous and critical occasions. He has been unsparing in his condemnation of the predatory instincts and activities of nations, whether of the military or of the economic variety. He has never believed that war can ever be ended by the pacts of robber nations so long as they do not repent and give up their wicked ways and the spoils thereof. The remedy lies in the giving up of greed and promotion of neighbourly feelings between nation and nation as between individual men. Hence the poet-seer has repeatedly given in various discourses and contexts his exposition of the ancient text of the *Isopanishad:*

> All this whatsoever that moves in Nature is indwelt by the Lord. Enjoy thou what hath been allotted to thee by Him. Do not covet anybody's wealth.

In pursuance of this line of thought, while the poet has expressed himself in unambiguous language against the use of violence by the party in power in Russia, and while he holds that private property has its legitimate uses for the maintenance and promotion of individual freedom and individual self-creation and self-expression and for social welfare, he sees and states clearly the advantages of Russian collectivism, as will be evident from his book *Rashiar Chithi* in Bengali and the following cabled reply to a query of Professor Petrov of V.O.K.S., Moscow :

> Your success is due to turning the tide of wealth from the individual to collective humanity.

How the poet feels for the humblest of human beings may be understood from many of his poems and utterances ;. e. g., the following from *Gitanjali :*

> Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest, and lowliest and lost.
>
> My heart can never find its way to where Thou keepest company with the companionless among the poorest, the lowliest and the lost.

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and His garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like Him come down on the dusty soil.

In spite of all his genuine sympathy and love for the poor and the down-trodden, he feels in all humility that he is not one with them. In *The Great Symphony* he mourns :

Not everywhere have I won access,
my ways of life have intervened
and kept me outside.
The tiller at the plough,
the weaver at the loom,
the fisherman plying his net,
these and the rest toil and sustain the world
with their world-wide varied labour.
I have known them from a corner,
banished to a high pedestal of society
reared by renown.
Only the outer fringe have I approached,
not being able to enter
the intimate precincts.

Thirty-one years ago he wrote a poem, included in the Bengali *Gītāñjali*, addressed to the Motherland, referring to the treatment accorded to the "untouchables". Its first stanza runs as follows (translation):

O my hapless country, those whom thou hast insulted—
To them shalt thou have to be equal in thy humiliation.
Those whom thou hast deprived of the rights of man,
Kept them standing before thee, not taking them in thy lap,
All of them shalt thou have to equal in humiliation.

As regards the poet's ideal of womanhood, the passage in *Chitra*, beginning,

I am Chitra. No goddess to be worshipped, nor yet the object of common pity to be brushed aside like a moth with indifference. If you deign to keep me by your side in the path of danger and daring,

> if you allow me to share the great duties of your life, then you will know my true self.

is well known. But to get a complete idea of what he thinks of Woman, many other poems and prose writings of his have to be read. For instance, among poems, "Sabalā" ("The Strong Damsel") in *Mahuā*, not yet translated, written with reference to the word "Abalā" ("The Weak"), a Sanskrit word denoting woman, the series of poems named "Nāmni" in the same work, "Nāri" in *Arogya*, etc. *Gora* and some of his other novels and many short stories enable the reader to know his ideals of womanhood, though he writes as an artist, not as a preacher.

Regarding our unfortunate sisters, stigmatized as fallen women, though their betrayers, ravishers, and exploiters are *not* called "fallen" men, read the poet's "Patitā" ("The Fallen Woman") in *Kāhini*, and "Karunā" ("Compassion") and "Satī" ("The Chaste Woman") in *Chaitāli*. These, too, have not yet been translated into English.

As an educationist, he has preserved in his ideal of Visva-Bharati, the international residential university, the spirit of the ancient ideal of the *tapovanas* or forest-retreats of the Teachers of India—its simplicity, its avoidance of softness and luxury, its insistence on purity and chastity, its spirituality, its interplay of influence between teachers and students, its reverence for the Infinite Spirit, its practical touch with Nature, and the free play that it gave to all normal activities of body and soul. Up till his last serious illness, whenever he was at Santiniketan he would periodically conduct the service and prayers in the Mandir and pour out his soul in elevating and inspiring discourses. While the ancient spirit has been thus sought to be kept up, there is in this open-air institution at Santiniketan no cringing to mere forms, however hoary with antiquity. The poet's mental outlook is universal. He claims for his people all knowledge and culture, whatever their origin, as their province. Hence, while he wants the youth of India of both sexes to be rooted in India's past and to draw sustenance therefrom, while he has been practically

promoting the culture of the principal religious communities of India as far as the resources of the institution permit, he has also extended a friendly invitation and welcome to the exponents of foreign cultures as well. China's response has taken the concrete shape of the Cheena-Bhavana for the study of Chinese culture. Chinese, Tibetan and Islamic studies—and, of course, the study of Hindu and Buddhist culture and of the teachings of the medieval saints of India, have long been special features of Visva-Bharati. All this has made it possible, for any who may so desire, to pursue the study of comparative religion at Santiniketan. He wants that there should be no racialism, no sectarian and caste and colour prejudice in his institution.

Visva-Bharati stands neither for merely literary, nor for merely vocational education but for both and more. Tagore wants both man the knower and man the doer and maker. He wants an intellectual as well as an artistic and aesthetic education. He wants the growth of a personality equal to meeting the demands of society and solitude alike. Visva-Bharati now comprises a primary and a high school, a college, a school of graduate research, a school of painting and modelling and of some crafts, a music school, a school of agriculture and village welfare work, a co-operative bank with branches and a public health institute. Here students of both sexes have their games and physical exercises. The poet's idea of a village is that it should combine all its beautiful and healthy rural characteristics with the amenities of town life necessary for fullness of life and efficiency. Some such amenities have already been provided in his schools. There is co-education in all stages. It is one of the cherished desires of the poet to give girl students complete education in a woman's University based on scientific methods, some of which are the fruits of his own insight and mature experience.

When he is spoken of as the founder of Visva-Bharati, it is not to be understood that he has merely given it a local habitation and a name and buildings and funds and ideals. That



SINGING TO HIS FATHER

Collection : Kalabhavan

By Gaganendranath Tagore

he has, no doubt, done. To provide funds, he had, in the earlier years of the school, sometimes to sell the copyright of some of his books and even temporarily, or for good, to part with some of Mrs. Tagore's jewellery. His subsequent efforts to collect funds are well known. In the earlier years of the institution, he took classes in many subjects, lived with the boys in their rooms, entertained them in the evenings by story-telling, recitations of his poems, games of his own invention, methods of sense-training of his own devising, etc. Many a day at that time would Mrs. Tagore, who was an expert in the culinary art, regale the boys and their teachers with dishes prepared by herself. In those days when the number of teachers and students was small, the institution was like a home for them all. Even more recently the poet has been known to take some classes. And he continues to keep himself in touch with the institution in various ways.

Student self-government, unsectarian prayers and worship, and Season Festivals are characteristic features of Visva-Bharati. The poet also introduced the "honour system" of keeping no watch over his students in examinations. The opportunities which the pupils of Santiniketan have had to render service to the neighbouring villages, have resulted in the establishment of the Prasād Vidyālaya and the Pearson School for the Santals.

That Tagore is an independent thinker in education has been recognised. But one of the group of institutions constituting Visva-Bharati, namely, Sikshā-Satra, has not received due public attention, and is perhaps practically unknown even to Indian educationists. It was founded in 1924. Its origin and principles were stated when it was founded, and re-stated by Mr. L. K. Elmhirst in Visva-Bharati Bulletin No. 9, December, 1928, from which I make a few extracts below.

> To dig our own cave in the earth, where we could creep out of sight, much to the disgust of the matter-of-fact gardener, to chop sticks with a real axe, to be given a pair of boots to polish, a fire to light, or some dough to knead and bake—these were our keenest joys; yet only too often had we to be content with toy bricks, toy houses,

toy tools or toy kitchens ; or, if serious work was provided, it was in the nature of sweated labour, which fatigued without giving play to our creative instincts.

The aim, then, of the Sikshā-Satra is through experience in dealing with this overflowing abundance of child life, its charm and its simplicity, to provide the utmost liberty within surroundings that are filled with creative possibilities, with opportunities for the joy of play that is work,—the work of exploration ; and of work that is play, —the reaping of a succession of novel experiences ; to give the child that freedom of growth which the young tree demands for its tender shoot, that field for self-expansion in which all young life finds both training and happiness.

As regards the age at which the child's education at the Sikshā-Satra should begin, it is stated :

It is between the ages of six and twelve that the growing child is most absorbed in gathering impressions through sight, smell, hearing and taste but more especially through touch and the use of the hands. From the start, therefore, the child enters the Sikshā-Satra as an apprentice in handicraft as well as housecraft. In the workshop, as a trained producer and as a potential creator, it will acquire skill and win freedom for its hands ; whilst as an inmate of the house, which it helps to construct and furnish and maintain, it will gain expanse of spirit and win freedom as a citizen of the small community.

Some of the crafts which the pupils can learn are mentioned in the Bulletin. It is stated that,

From the earliest years it is well to introduce to the children some special craft, easily grasped by small hands, which is of definite economic value. The product should be of real use in the home, or have a ready sale outside. . . . In the carrying out of every one of these crafts, again, some art, some science, some element of business enters in.

Rabindranath has been a journalist from his teens. He has often written with terrible directness. In years past the poet successfully edited several monthlies and contributed, and still contributes, to numerous more. He has written for many weeklies, too. He is the only man in Bengal I know who was capable of filling a magazine from the first page to the last with

excellent reading in prose and verse of every description required.

His contributions to periodicals have been copious all along, and in such work he has been regular, punctual and methodical. It is easy and pleasant to read his beautiful handwriting. As an editor, he was the making of many authors who subsequently became well-known, by the thorough revision to which he subjected their work.

His beautiful Bengali handwriting has been copied by so many persons in Bengal that even those who have had occasion to see it very frequently cannot always distinguish the genuine thing from its imitation.

There is an impression abroad that no English translation by Rabindranath of any of his Bengali poems was published anywhere before the *Gitanjali* poems. That is a mistake. As far as I can now trace, the first English translations by himself of his poems appeared in the February, April and September numbers of the *Modern Review* in 1912. This is how he came to write in English for publication. Some time in 1911 I suggested that his Bengali poems should appear in English garb. So he gave me translations of two of his poems by the late Mr. Lokendranath Palit, I.C.S. Of these "Fruitless Cry" appeared in May and "The Death of the Star" in September, 1911, in the *Modern Review*. When I asked him by letter to do some translations himself, he expressed diffidence and unwillingness and tried to put me off by playfully reproducing two lines from one of his poems of which the purport was, "On what pretext shall I now call back her to whom I bade adieu in tears?", the humorous reference being to the fact that he did not, as a school-boy, take kindly to school education and its concomitant exercises. But his genius and the English muse would not let him off so easily. And I, too, had not ceased to remind him that his Bengali poems should be translated by himself. So a short while afterwards, he showed me some of his translations, asking me playfully whether as a quondam school master I considered

them up to standard. These appeared in my *Review*. These are, to my knowledge, his earliest published English compositions. Their manuscripts have been preserved.

He has been all along very diffident in writing English, though even when he was a student of Henry Morley in his teens that strict judge of English praised his style and diction before his British class-mates. The subject of what Rabindranath wrote and submitted to the professor was "Englishmen in India", who came in for much criticism in his composition. Henry Morley asked his British students to note what Rabindranath had written, as many of them were likely in future to serve in India in some capacity or other.

I have referred to his beautiful hand. All calligraphists cannot and do not become painters, though, as Rabindranath burst into fame as a painter when almost seventy, the passage from calligraphy to painting might seem natural. I do not intend, nor am I competent, to discourse on his paintings. They are neither what is known as Indian art, nor are they any mere imitation of any ancient or modern Oriental or European painting. They are unclassed. One thing which may perhaps stand in the way of the commonalty understanding and appreciating them is that they seldom tell a story. They express in line and colour what even the rich vocabulary and consummate literary art and craftsmanship of Rabindranath could not or did not say. He never went to any school of art or took lessons from any artist at home. Nor did he want to imitate anybody. So, he is literally an original artist. If there be any resemblance in his style to that of any other schools of painters, it is entirely accidental and unintentional. In this connection I call to mind one interesting fact. In the Bengali *Santiniketan Patra* ("Santiniketan Magazine") of the month of Jyaistha, 1333 B. E., published fifteen years ago, Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, the famous artist, described (pp. 100-101) how his uncle Rabindranath was instrumental in leading him to evolve his own style of indigenous art. Summing up, Abanindranath writes :

Bengal's poet suggested the lines of Art, Bengal's artist (i.e., Abanindranath himself) continued to work alone along those lines for many a day. (Translation).

It was my happy privilege some twenty-three years back to live at Santiniketan as the poet-seer's neighbour for long periods at a stretch. During one such period, my working room and sleeping room combined commanded an uninterrupted view of the small two-storied cottage, "Dehali", in which he then lived —only a field intervened between. During that period I could never at night catch the poet going to sleep earlier than myself. And when early in the morning I used to go out for a stroll, if by chance it was very early I found him engaged in his daily devotions in the open upper storey verandah facing the east, but usually I found that his devotions were already over and he was busily engaged in some of his usual work. At mid-day, far from enjoying a siesta, he did not even recline. During the whole day and night, he spent only a few hours in sleep and bath and meals, and devoted all the remaining hours to work. During that period I never found that he used a hand-fan or allowed anybody to fan him in summer. And the sultry summer days of Santiniketan are unforgettable !

His late serious illness and the infirmities of age have necessitated changes in his habits. But even now he works longer than many young men. Not long ago during Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Santiniketan, he had to exact a promise from the poet that he would take some rest at mid-day.

I have all along looked upon him as an earnest "Sādhak". He is not, however, an ascetic—nor, of course, a lover of luxury. His ideal of life is different. "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation," he has said in one of his poems.

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight.

Thou ever pourest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various colours and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim.

> My world will light its hundred different lamps with thy flames and place them before the altar of thy temple.
>
> No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight.
>
> Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumination of joy, and all my desires ripen into fruits of love. (*Gitanjali*).

The poet has been so reticent regarding his personal relations that, before Srimati Hemlata Devi, eldest daughter-in-law of his eldest brother, wrote an article on "Rabindranath at Home", little was known of his home life. Her pen picture revealed what a loving and devoted husband, what an affectionate father and what a kind and considerate master to his servants he was and is. He has been a widower since November 23, 1902. We can here extract only a few sentences from Srimati Hemlata Devi's article, beginning with his ascetic experiments.

> Sometimes the Poet would begin dieting for no earthly reason with such rigid determination that the whole family would feel concerned. . . . On occasions when his dieting reached almost the "starvation level", we would approach his wife to exert her influence and prevent a catastrophe. She knew her husband better and so she did nothing of the kind. I remember she once said : "You do not know, he insists on doing what he is asked not to do : one of these days his body itself would protest and then he will take to his food."
>
> He is an affectionate father. He nursed his first child—a baby daughter—with a mother's care . . . . We have ourselves seen the Poet feeding the baby, changing her linen and making the bed.

And then this sacred picture of the poet tenderly nursing his wife during her last illness :

> Members of the family still remember the picture of the Poet patiently sitting by the sick bed, nursing his wife literally day and night close on two months before death finally released her from her pain. His constant ministering to her comfort was instinct with love and concern. Electric fans were not known in those days ; I see a distinct picture of the Poet moving a palm-leaf hand-fan, to and fro, fanning his wife to sleep with tender care. In those days in affluent households it was almost a custom to engage paid nurses. The Poet's house was perhaps the first exception.

RABINDRANATH AS VEDANTIST

By Hirendranath Datta

It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that the Vedānta is the crown and consummation of Indian thought. As the Rev. J. Tyssul Davies has rightly pointed out, "no great soul has appeared in India during the last 3,000 years that has not accepted the call of the teaching of the Vedānta, the spirit of the oldest and most enduring religious philosophy, based not on speculation but on real experience and summed up in three words—*Tat tvam asi*, 'Thou art Brahman'."

Rabindranath is assuredly one of the greatest souls who have appeared in India in recent times and being what he is, he too, like his great predecessors, has "accepted the call of the teaching of the Vedānta,"—as I propose to show in this brief study.

Now, what is the Vedānta? No doubt, we have heard of the *Prasthāna-Traya*, the three *Piṭakas* or receptacles which hold the Vedānta, viz. the Upanisads, the Brahma-Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita. But when all is said and done, it is the Upanisads which are the primary Vedānta—*Vedānto nāma Upanisad*—and the ancient wisdom of the *Rishis* is truly enshrined therein.

Why is the Vedānta so called? Not only because it is the acme of all *Vidyā* (called "Veda" in the old days)—being itself the *Parāvidyā*—but because it is last in order of sequence in the Vedic Canon. It has been spoken of as *Sarva-Vidyā-Pratiṣṭhā*, the root-base of all the Sciences and Arts, which indeed derive their validity from it. It is verily like a lamp in a dark place, *Ghanāndhakāreṣviva Dīpadarśanam*—illuminating with its arc-light the darkest and most dismal problems of life.

Rabindranath, as far as I know, has never made a detailed study of the controversial aspects of the Vedānta, as we find them expounded by the famous commentators or in such jaw-

breaking Vedāntic treatises as *Advaita Siddhi* ; but that he is steeped through and through in the spirit of the Vedānta, none will dispute who has made even a cursory study of his works. From his boyhood upwards, as the son of a great Vedāntist (Maharshi Debendranath Tagore), Rabindranath breathed the aroma of the Upanisads and were I a believer in the Darwinian theory of transmission of acquired qualities (a theory which the Neo-Darwinians have wholly repudiated), I would have claimed Rabindranath as a Vedāntist by inheritance and would have said that the Vedānta runs in his blood. More than that : I can say from personal knowledge that he is thoroughly at home in the Upanisads.

Some time ago, I had occasion to write a review of the *Ten Principal Upanisads*—put into English by Purohit Swami and W. B. Yeats, which book the publishers introduced to the world in these words : "The translations hitherto available are out of date and are written in a style which fails to convey the magnificence of the poetry of the original." Yeats was a master of English and naturally the translation sponsored by him is good—but only in parts. His great limitation was that he did not know one word of Sanskrit and made the translation "as though the original had been written in common English" ; but common English, I venture to think, is hardly adequate in this case, for not only are the Upanisads mysticism and philosophy, but in the words of Yeats himself they are "most beautiful as literature". In my review, after pointing out certain shortcomings of the translators, I suggested that if the translation was to breathe the spirit of the original, the translator should be a poet and a mystic at the same time, and I said that the only person I could think of in that connection, was Rabindranath and I prayed that he might make time some day to undertake a translation of the principal Upanisads, using as the vehicle of translation, not the "common English" of Yeats but the vibrant and sonorous English of his own *Gītāñjali.*

When later I met Rabindranath at Kalimpong, I repeated

my prayer to him and almost persuaded him to accede to it,—but illness intervened and my whole scheme has, alas ! "gone agley".

I have been speaking of Rabindranath as a Vedāntist. But be it noted that, in the words of Ophelia, he "wears his rue (I mean his Vedānta) with a difference". For instance, he does not believe in asceticism—*Vairāgya.*

বৈরাগ্যসাধনে মুক্তি, সে আমার নয়॥

. . . .

ইন্দ্রিয়ের দ্বার
রুদ্ধ করি যোগাসন, সে নহে আমার।
যে কিছু আনন্দ আছে দৃশ্যে গন্ধে গানে
তোমার আনন্দ রবে তার মাঝখানে॥

"Deliverance is not for me in renunciation,
I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight."

. . . .

"No, I will never shut the doors of my senses.
The delights of sight and hearing and touch
will bear Thy delight." (*Gītānjali.*[1])

So he exclaims—

মরিতে চাহি না আমি সুন্দর ভুবনে,
মানবের মাঝে আমি বাঁচিবারে চাই।
এই সূর্যকরে এই পুষ্পিত কাননে
জীবন্ত হৃদয়মাঝে যেন স্থান পাই।

"I do not wish to die in this beautiful world,
I wish to live on in the world of men.
May I find my place in the light of the sun,
In these flowering gardens, in the midst of living hearts !"

1 Wherever possible the poet's own rendering into English has been given, and the name of the book wherein it appears quoted.

What appeals to him is

হঠাৎ কখন সন্ধ্যাবেলায়
নাম-হারা ফুল গন্ধ এলায়,
প্রভাতবেলায় হেলাভরে করে অরুণ কিরণে তুচ্ছ
উদ্ধত যত শাখার শিখরে রডোডেন্ড্রন গুচ্ছ ॥

"When of a sudden in the evening
The nameless flower spreads out its fragrance ;
When in the early morn clusters of rhododendrons,
Swaying on the crest of the upraised branches,
Rival the glory of the dawn
In an easy abandon of pride."

Thus in his poem "Chitrā" he speaks of *Prakriti* in this wise :

জগতের মাঝে কত বিচিত্র তুমি হে
তুমি বিচিত্ররূপিণী।

. . . .

মুখর নূপুর বাজিছে সুদূর আকাশে,
অলক-গন্ধ উড়িছে মন্দ বাতাসে,
মধুর নৃত্যে শিথিল-চিত্তে বিকাশে
কত মঞ্জুল রাগিণী।

"Endlessly varied art thou in the exuberant world, Lady of Manifold Magnificence ! Thy path is strewn with lights, thy touch thrills into flowers ; that trailing skirt of thine sweeps the whirl of a dance among the stars, and thy many-toned music is echoed from innumerable worlds through signs and colours." (*The Fugitive.*)

Māyā-Vāda, which is an integral part of Sankara's Vedānta, is anathema to him :

হা রে নিরানন্দ দেশ, পরি জীর্ণ জরা,
বহি বিজ্ঞতার বোঝা, ভাবিতেছ মনে

ঈশ্বরের প্রবঞ্চনা পড়িয়াছে ধরা
সুচতুর সূক্ষ্মদৃষ্টি তোমার নয়নে।

. . . .

লক্ষ কোটি জীব লয়ে এ বিশ্বের মেলা
তুমি জানিতেছ মনে সব ছেলেখেলা।

"Alas, my cheerless country, donning the worn-out
garment of decrepitude,
Loaded with the burden of wisdom, you imagine
you have seen through this fraud of creation."

. . . .

"Millions of living beings make up the vast fair of
this world
And you ignore it all as a child's play !"

More than that: for him, *Mukti* is not the slipping of the dewdrop into the shoreless sea to be lost therein :

यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रे
अस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय।

—"As the rivers moving into the ocean disappear, losing both name and form."

How then may he be regarded as a Vedāntist ? Well, if one has made a deep study of the Upanisads, he must be aware that they are irrigated by two parallel streams of thought : (a) the negative, impersonal, detached, indescribable perception of the ineffable Brahman where the Absolute is spoken of as *Neti Neti*, as the *a-śabdam*, *a-sparśam*, etc. ; and (b) the positive, personal, intimate, adorable orison of the Godhead, when Brahman is regarded as a wondrous Personality, Who closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet, reveals Himself as such to the intuition of man—where He is *Mahān Prabhurvai*, *Puruṣah* : the sovereign Lord, the supreme Person and is realised as Love, as *Raso vai sah*, and as

प्रेयः पुत्रात् प्रेयो वित्तात् प्रेयः अन्यस्मात् सर्वस्मात् ।

"dearer than child, dearer than wealth, dearer than any thing else."

Naturally it is this latter aspect which appeals to Rabindranath, and diving deep into the temple-cave of his own heart he speaks of Brahman as

সুন্দর হৃদিরঞ্জন তুমি নন্দন ফুলহার
তুমি অনন্ত নব বসন্ত অন্তরে আমার ।

"Thou art the beautiful one, thou bringest delight to
my heart,
Thou art the garland of the flowers of paradise,
Thou blossomest as eternal spring in my heart."

and apostrophises Him thus in his intimate way :

ওহে অন্তরতম,
মিটেছে কি তব সকল তিয়াষ আসি' অন্তরে মম ।
দুঃখসুখের লক্ষ ধারায়
পাত্র ভরিয়া দিয়েছি তোমায়,
নিঠুর পীড়নে নিঙাড়ি বক্ষ দলিত দ্রাক্ষা সম ।

"Thou dweller of my heart,
Art thou satisfied now that thou hast taken abode
in my soul ?
In a thousand streams of grief and joy I filled your cup,
squeezing my heart like crushed grapes."

Again—

সীমার মাঝে অসীম তুমি বাজাও আপন সুর
আমার মধ্যে তোমার প্রকাশ তাই এত মধুর ।

. . . .

বোলো আজি তারে
চিনিলাম তোমারে আমারে ।

হে অতিথি চুপে চুপে
বারংবার ছায়ারূপে
এসেছ বাঞ্ছিত মোর দ্বারে।

"Infinite art thou, playing thy tunes in finite modes,
That is why thy revelation in me is so beautiful."

. . . .

"Tell him, now I have known
the mystery of thee and me.
O guest, ever expected,
Thou camest time and again
stealthily as a shadow to my door."

Does not that remind one of the Upanisadic passages—

गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठम्;
हृदि अयम्;
हृदा मनीषा मनसाभिक्लृप्तः।

"Cave-dweller is He—seated in the cavity, He is in the heart. By the heart, by intuition, by the illumined mind is He to be known."

More than that. He calls upon Him—

আমারে করো তোমার বীণা

"Take me up Master-Musician! and make me thy harp. Let your delectable fingers sweep over my heart-strings and produce divine melody."

For we have to bear in mind that first and foremost Rabindranath is a poet and that good poetry, as Milton told us, must be simple, sensuous and impassioned. Rabindranath's poetry has all these qualities but above all it is *sensuous*, which, of course, is not the same as sensual.

The Upanisads speak of the awesomeness of God—"He is like a lifted thunderbolt"—

महद्भयं वज्रमुद्यतम्;

भोषास्माद् वातः पवते भीषोदेति सूर्यः ।
भीषास्माद् अग्निश्चन्द्रश्च मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ॥

"The wind blows for fear of Him and the sun rises. The fire burns, the lord of the Devas energises and Death proceeds too for fear of Him."

Rabindranath is familiar with all this—for he has seen it and felt it—

রুদ্র! তোমার দারুণ দীপ্তি
এসেছে দুয়ার ভেদিয়া

. . . .

এমন সময়ে ঈশান! তোমার
বিষাণ উঠেছে বাজিয়া।

. . . .

ভৈরব! তুমি কি বেশে এসেছ
ললাটে ফুঁসিছে নাগিনী;
রুদ্রবীণায় এই কি বাজিল
সুপ্রভাতের রাগিণী?

"O *Rudra*, your awe-inspiring effulgence
has come breaking through the door;

. . . .

"While your trumpet, O *Iśāna*, thunders.

. . . .

"What a garb you have assumed, O *Bhairava*,[1]
The serpents are hissing on your brow.
Is this the music of the auspicious morn on
your *vīnā*?"

What appeals to him however is not this *Aiśvarya* but the *Mādhurya* of Brahman—not His "majesty" but His "humility".

1 "Rudra", "Iśāna" and "Bhairava" are names of Śiva.

So he says :

দূর হতে ভেবেছিনু মনে
দুর্জয় নির্দয় তুমি, কাঁপে পৃথ্বী তোমার শাসনে।
তুমি বিভীষিকা,
দুঃখীর বিদীর্ণ বক্ষে জ্বলে তব লেলিহান শিখা।
দক্ষিণ হাতের শেল উঠেছে ঝড়ের মেঘপানে,
সেথা হতে বজ্র টেনে আনে।
যখন উদ্যত ছিল তোমার অশনি
তোমারে আমার চেয়ে বড় বলে' নিয়েছিনু গণি'।
তোমার আঘাত সাথে নেবে এলে তুমি
যেথা মোর আপনার ভূমি।
ছোট হয়ে গেছ আজ
আমার টুটিল সব লাজ।

"From afar I thought you were the merciless one,
under whose invincible sway the whole world
rocks in fear.
I thought you to be the terrible one,
whose tongue of fire flames in the broken heart of
the wretched.
When the trident in your right hand rose to the
storm-clouds to bring down thunder,
when the thunderbolt in your hand was ready to
be flung down,
I took you to be mightier than I.
Now that to strike me you have come down to
my own little world,
You have grown small and I am afraid no longer."

What a fine Vedāntic, or shall we say Vaisnavic, touch !

Last but not least Rabindranath is a Vedāntist by his living sense of the abiding presence of God in all things. Like Tennyson, he also has a constant feeling "of the actual

immanence of God in the infinitesimal atom as in the vastest system."

এ আমার শরীরের শিরায় শিরায়
যে প্রাণ-তরঙ্গমালা রাত্রিদিন ধায়
সেই প্রাণ ছুটিয়াছে বিশ্ব-দিগ্বিজয়ে,
সেই প্রাণ অপরূপ ছন্দে তালে লয়ে
নাচিছে ভুবনে।

"The same stream of life that runs through my veins
night and day
runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measure."
(*Gītāñjali.*)

Again :

হে নাথ, অবজ্ঞা করি' যাও নাই ফিরে
আমার সে ধূলাস্তূপ খেলাঘর দেখে।
খেলা মাঝে শুনিতে পেয়েছি থেকে থেকে
যে চরণধ্বনি, আজ শুনি তাই বাজে
জগৎ-সঙ্গীত সাথে চন্দ্রসূর্য মাঝে।

"Thou didst not turn in contempt from my childish play
among dust,
and the steps that I heard in my playroom are the same
that are echoing from star to star."
(*Gītāñjali.*)

In the Upanisads, we read of the Rishi who addressing all "the sons of immortality" proclaims that he has known the divine effulgence beyond the depths of darkness—to know whom is the only path to immortal life.

वेदाहम् एतं पुरुषं महान्तम्
आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्।

"Verily have I known the great Puruṣa, the sun-hued one, beyond the darkness."

And the Rishi piles up salutation to Him who pervades and permeates the universe :

यो देवोऽग्नौ योऽप्सु
यो विश्वं भुवनम् आविवेश
य ओषधिषु यो वनस्पतिषु
तस्मै देवाय नमो नमः ॥

"To Him be salutation ever more—He who is in the fire, in the waters, in the plants and in the forest trees, who is everywhere."

Rabindranath also has a similar vision and apostrophising the universal Lord, he addresses Him thus :

হে বিশ্বদেব, মোর কাছে তুমি
দেখা দিলে আজ কি বেশে ?
দেখিনু তোমারে পূর্ব্ব গগনে,
দেখিনু তোমারে স্বদেশে।
ললাট তোমার নীল নভতল
বিমল আলোকে চির-উজ্জ্বল,
নীরব আশীষ-সম হিমাচল
তব বরাভয় কর,—
সাগর তোমার পরশি' চরণ
পদধূলি সদা করিছে হরণ ;
জাহ্নবী তব হার-আভরণ
দুলিছে বক্ষপর।

"Lord God of the universe !
in what form today
art thou revealed before my eyes !
I have seen thee in the eastern sky,
ever bright in clear light,
Bestowing the boon of fearlessness
thy hand rises as the Himāchal
in silent blessing ;

The sea touches thy feet and washes away the dust ;
On thy breast lies at rest
the gleaming Ganga as a chain."
(*Sheaves*: N. Gupta's rendering.)

Now from this sense of the immanence of God follows as an inescapable corollary the solidarity of man—the feeling that we are all rooted in the One Life so that the lowest *is* the highest—*Brahma Dāsāh Brahma Kitabāh*—"God is in the sinner as He is in the saint", and the poet naturally inveighs against the treatment meted out by the less enlightened among his countrymen to the *Parias* and the *Panchamas* :

হে মোর দুর্ভাগা দেশ, যাদের করেছ অপমান,
অপমানে হ'তে হবে তাহাদের সবার সমান
মানুষের অধিকারে
বঞ্চিত করেছ যারে,
সম্মুখে দাঁড়ায়ে রেখে তবু কোলে দাও নাই স্থান,
অপমানে হ'তে হবে তাহাদের সবার সমান ॥

"O my unfortunate country, those whom you have debased,
they will drag you down to their own level,
those whom you have deprived of their human rights,
who stand before you but find no room in your lap,
they will drag you down to their own level."

And to bring this lesson home to all and sundry, the poet tells us in the poem, দেবতার বিদায় (*The Deity's Farewell*):

সসঙ্কোচে ভক্তবর কহিলেন তারে
"আরে আরে অপবিত্র, দূর হ'য়ে যারে।"
সে কহিল "চলিলাম"—চক্ষের নিমেষে
ভিখারী ধরিল মূর্তি দেবতার বেশে।

"Shrinking with disgust, the devotee cried,
'Impure one, get thee gone !'

'So be it,' He answered,
and in the twinkling of an eye,
the beggar has assumed the Deity's shape."

To clinch the matter the poet invites everyone to the grand 'general-assembly' of humanity in the poem, মহামানবের সাগর তীরে *(On the Sea-shore of Humanity)*:

এস ব্রাহ্মণ শুচি করি মন
ধরো হাত সবাকার
এস হে পতিত, হোক অপনীত
সব অপমান ভার।

"Come Brahmin, chasten your heart
and stand in line with all ;
Come outcaste, let your humiliation
be wiped out for ever."

Note, however, that this is not merely the democratic equality of men but something deeper and more fundamental—for the poet realises in his heart of hearts that,

মোর মনুষ্যত্ব সে তো তোমারি প্রতিমা
আত্মার মহত্ত্বে মম তোমারি মহিমা। মহেশ্বর!

"My humanity reflects the divine.
In the greatness of my soul,
He, the great Lord, proclaims Himself."

That strikes—does it not? the fundamental note of the Vedānta. The same note rings out even when the poet is singing his patriotic songs :

হে রুদ্রবীণা, বাজো বাজো বাজো
ঘৃণা করি দূরে আছে যারা আজো
বন্ধ নাশিবে তারাও আসিবে

দাঁড়াবে ঘিরে—
এই ভারতের মহামানবের সাগরতীরে ॥

"Let the harp of Rudra ring out !
Those who stand aloof in contempt,
even they shall come
when the obstacles fall away
and the path is made clear for them
—to stand in a ring on the sea-shore
of this vast humanity of India."

And in '*Jana-gana*', in which Rabindranath reaches the loftiest height of patriotic aspiration, he as a true Vedāntist calls upon the Eternal Charioteer to lead our Nation to inevitable victory with the clangour of His conch-shell :

পতন-অভ্যুদয়-বন্ধুর পন্থা যুগ যুগ ধাবিত যাত্রী
হে চির সারথি, তব রথচক্রে মুখরিত পথ দিনরাত্রি।
দারুণ বিপ্লব মাঝে তব শঙ্খধ্বনি বাজে,
সঙ্কট দুঃখ-ত্রাতা
জনগণ-দুঃখ-ত্রায়ক জয় হে, ভারত-ভাগ্য-বিধাতা !

"Eternal Charioteer, thou drivest man's history
along the road rugged with rises and falls of Nations.
Amidst all tribulations and terror
thy trumpet sounds to hearten those that despair
and droop,
and guide all people in their paths of peril and
pilgrimage.
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee !"

(*The poet's own rendering.*)

THE POET IN PHILOSOPHY AND AFFAIRS

By James H. Cousins

It is characteristic of expression from the consecrated imagination that the complete import of its idea may be touched at any point in its utterance. The inner life of the supreme artist in literature may be figured as a sphere whose totality rests on every point on its surface. I found the total inner Rabindranath when, stretched on grass on a hillside in the Nilgiris on a vacation nineteen years ago, I read his new book entitled "Creative Unity" which had just reached me with the author's own delicately bold signature, dated April 20, 1922, the very date of the writing of this article, again on the Nilgiris. In that small but immensely significant book I found the same clue to the entire life-work of Rabindranath, both before and after it, as I did to the life-work of AE in his equally small and equally significant "Song and its Fountains" ten years later, and both books sit together on my shelf in a companionship of revelation that has in it, I believe, the possibility of a revolution of world-values, in the art of the poet, and in the application of the poet's thought and imagination to the affairs of humanity.

In "Creative Unity" Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has given to the world a volume which, by virtue of its transcendent qualities of utterance and content, takes rank among the masterpieces of literature; a volume which sets the profoundest synthetic thought close to the world's vast problem of disease and agony today, and out of an unflinching but compassionate diagnosis prescribes for temporal ills heroic remedies from the pharmacopeia of eternal Truth. He has rendered a signal service to both literature and philosophy by giving his unique gifts of brilliant ideas, of splendour and vividness of metaphor and phraseology, to the expression of an urgent and world-embracing purpose, and by releasing philosophy from the bare prison of textualism and scholastic history, and setting it to the testing of

the activities of life with the warning, pleading, counselling trumpet of high literature at its lips. He has made it impossible for any who have ears to hear the resonant and shining message of this book to acquiesce any longer in the indolent and uncritical acceptance of literature as a polite mental and emotional libertinism and philosophy as its medicine and penance.

The central message of "Creative Unity" is its author's plea for the establishment in human relationships of a unity which, by participating in the universal function of creation, attains peace and joy ; a *creative* unity in contradistinction to the present world-wide religious, racial and social disunity which, because it is essentially uncreative, and merely productive and destructive, is vowed to spiritual abasement, intellectual and emotional poverty and physical misery as its inevitable sequelæ.

To realise the full significance of Rabindranath's call to creative unity in human affairs, it is necessary to understand the implications which he puts on the words "creative" and "unity". In the mind of India, of which Rabindranath is one of the most widely heard voices, there is postulated in the universe a creative Power, and a Substance which, in being capable of response to the Power, has within itself also the principle of creation. All activity of a creative kind is seen as the making of new combinations within limited areas of the unlimited possibilities of variation in life, substance and their forms. Creation in this sense is not simple reproduction or multiplicity, but the setting up of a process which draws around a special centre of energy certain related expressions in substance and quality, and the "making" of some new object of art that thrills both maker and beholder with joy in the disclosure through things finite of the wonder and beauty of the Infinite. Artistic creation is possible only through acts of unification in materials and qualities : social creation, instead of the vast antagonistic proliferations of today, is possible only through acts of unification in the thoughts

and feelings, the aims and movements, of human beings. Says Rabindranath :

> We feel that this world is a creation ; that in its centre there is a living idea which reveals itself in an eternal symphony played on innumerable instruments all keeping perfect time. We know that this great world-verse, that runs from sky to sky, is not made for the mere enumeration of facts ; it has its direct revelation in our delight. That delight gives us the key to the truth of existence ; it is personality acting upon personalities through incessant manifestations.

When a great seer and sayer points his finger towards "the truth of existence", it behoves those who have set out with open eyes on exploration for that very Truth, to pay close heed to all that is involved in the crucial statement that "the truth of existence" is "personality acting on personalities. . . ." This full-minded attention is all the more necessary here because it happens that, through the exigencies of a language in which the mental and material solidity of the ancient Greek genius is predominant, the only word "personality" that Rabindranath could find for the full expression of that ultimate Being, or Life, or Consciousness within which "our little systems" and the incalculable universes revolve, is commonly used as meaning the reverse. And this workaday meaning of the word "personality" has come down through two thousand years of verbal custom from the days of the theatre of Greece and Rome, when, as in the Noh-drama of Japan today, the actor hid himself behind a *persona*, or mask (Latin, *per*, through ; *sono*, to speak ; that through which the actor spoke).

In the vocabulary of "Creative Unity" the derivation of "personality" is taken further back, from the thing spoken through, to the living speaker ; and this deepening of meaning refers not only to the personalities that are as cells in the body of the Great Personality, but also to the Great Personality Itself. Within the totality of existence and within its details there is consciousness, feeling, activity. No one of these terms gives full expression to the entity in whom these functions are co-

ordinated and given unity of life. The word "personality" is taken as coming nearest to adequacy of meaning.

It is obvious that a mind to which this "truth of existence" (personality acting on personalities within the "Divine Personality" that contains them, as Rabindranath avers) is not merely a literary idea but a statement of reality, cannot but look with disapproval on any human activity whose tendency is towards exclusiveness or the building of obstructions against the flow of the Universal Life. There is within each human being the impulse to creative unity. Says Rabindranath :

> It is the object of this Oneness within us to realise its infinity by perfect union of love with others. All obstacles to this union create misery, giving rise to the baser passions that are expressions of finitude, and of that separateness which is negative and therefore *māyā*.

Now the word "love" used in the foregoing quotation from "Creative Unity" is not a mere evaporation from the surface of a fluid sentimentality. It is the poet's expression of the fact that in the Universal Life there is a principle of cohesion through which it maintains its identity and continues its activity. Take away the cohesive principle of love from the Universal Being, and it would disintegrate into nothingness—but the notion is absurd, for Life and Love are fundamental ; you cannot get around them, or behind them, or through them, or beyond them. "In love we find a joy which is ultimate because it is the ultimate truth."

Love, too, was the ultimate truth to Rabindranath's immortal brother-poet, Shelley ; but it is characteristic of the different approach of West and East to "ultimate truth" that to Shelley love was the means to personal liberation, while to Rabindranath it is the cord of individual, social, national and international binding. In the ultimate both reach the same end. The freedom of love that Shelley dreamed of was freedom for love to find its full expression and voluntarily to seek its affinities ; the binding that Rabindranath affirms is the voluntary merging of



IN ENGLAND AT EIGHTEEN

the self of illuminated human beings with others through love. The one dreamed of love attainable ; the other affirms love present, and invincible if put into action. The western poet, from the side of humanity capable of Divinity, says, "We must be free in order to love" : the eastern poet, from the side of Divinity in humanity, says, "We must love in order to be free", and affirms the recognition of the essential unity of humanity as the measure and test of all movements that take to themselves the sacred name of freedom.

This measure and test is central in Rabindranath's message to the world in its application to the world-struggle now going on. The real struggle at every stage of human history, whether between nations, as between Britain and India, or within nations, as between the falsely rival communities in India, has been, he says, "between the living spirit of the people and the methods of nation-organising"; between the expanding soul of humanity in India or England, and mechanical limitations that refuse to adapt themselves to that expansion. Growth is inevitable, but "growth is not that enlargement which is merely adding to the dimensions of incompleteness" ; it is "the movement of a whole to a yet fuller wholeness", a movement that implies flexible organisation at every stage of the process ; the shaping service of a limitation that is yet free from rigidity, "some spiritual design of life" which curbs antagonistic activities, and transforms apparently incongruous groups into an "organic whole".

This organic condition of human society implies harmonious relationships. When "Creative Unity" was written, the political leaders of Europe were seeking a false harmony through a balance of power. Rabindranath saw that this attempt was doomed to failure, as we see today. He saw and declared that the strong think only of the strong and ignore the weak, wherein, he said, lay the peril of their losing the harmony at which they aimed, and of collapsing in a welter of still greater destruction than that from which they were then, after the war of 1914-1918, blindly trying to extricate themselves. He summed

up the situation at that time in a passage that is not only literature at its highest, but a prophecy and warning whose fulfilment we are witnessing today in Europe, and to some extent in Asia.

> Politicians calculate upon the number of mailed hands that are kept on the sword-hilts ; they do not possess the third eye to see the great invisible hand that clasps in silence the hand of the helpless and waits its time. The strong form their league by a combination of powers, driving the weak to form their own league with their God. I know I am crying in the wilderness when I raise the voice of warning ; and while the West is busy with its organisation of a machine-made peace, it will continue to nourish by its iniquities the underground forces of earthquake in the eastern continent. The West seems unconscious that science, by providing it with more and more power, is tempting it to suicide and encouraging it to accept the challenge of the disarmed ; it does not know that the challenge comes from a higher source.

What is the way of escape from the universal catastrophe that was inherent in the circumstances pointed out by Rabindranath twenty years ago and that is now upon the nations ? An indication of the way has moved by implication through the book. The solid clear-edged path of constructive idealism is under every step of the poet's criticism. He declares that "all systems produce evil sooner or later when the psychology which is at the root of them is wrong." He does not put his faith in systems or institutions but in individuals "all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly and act rightly. . . ." For such individuals,

> the highest purpose of this world is not merely living in it, knowing it and making use of it, but realising our own selves in it through expansion of sympathy ; not alienating ourselves from it and dominating it, but comprehending and uniting it with ourselves in perfect union.

Two means at hand to this end are education and art ; in the first, but in a different form and spirit from that obtainable in India today, can be found a meeting-ground between persons and groups of persons "where there can be no question of con-

flicting interests", but only a common pursuit of truth and a common sharing of the world's heritage of culture; in the second is the means of attainment of expression, which is fulfilment.

> In everyday life our personality moves in a narrow circle of immediate self-interest, and therefore our feelings and events, within that short range, become prominent subjects for ourselves. In their vehement self-assertion they ignore their unity with the All. . . . But art gives our personality the disinterested freedom of the eternal, there to find it in its true perspective.

There are other means, political, economical and the like, but to some of us education including art appears to be fundamental and essentially inclusive, and we give Rabindranath our gratitude for his objective efforts towards the establishment of true education in India.

In an address at Santiniketan, that home of the spirit in which I have had the happiness of staying occasionally, Rabindranath recently spoke of his approaching departure from this planet. But whatever he takes with him, there are and will be a vast company to whom his beautiful and sagacious spirit will be a perpetual presence through the utterances of his mind and imagination:

> The wisdom which is wiser than things known,
> The beauty which is fairer than things seen,
> Dreams which are nearer to eternity
> Than that most mortal tumult of the blood. . . .

as Arthur Symons wrote; and of that company in the remainder of this life and in lives to come I shall be one.

ON THE EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY OF POET RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE Indian poet, old and wise,
Is young with eighty years behind.
Like Buddha, rich in hope of life,
He breathes world-love to every mind.
O voice of a culture as old as mine !
Whose truth remains for us to find.
Forever, like the Ganges stream,
You sing with words severe and kind.

Chen Li-Fu

Dr. Chen Li-Fu is the Minister of Education of the National Government of China.

TAGORE'S SONGS

By Dhurjati Mukherjee

In Indian music, little distinction has been made so far between composition and execution. The specialties of the system, its nuances and nature of improvisation, were not favourable to notation that could divide the labour. Oral tradition was the rule here as in all other branches of learning which the Indian understood more as techniques of experiencing than ways of knowledge. A general feudal atmosphere was also congenial. The immediate reason, however, was that both poetry and music served religion. Bhaktas and Sādhakas would not distinguish the functions of the two arts so long as their chants were the outpourings of their devotion. It is strange but true that practically the entire corpus of pre-British Bengali poetic literature, the Dohās, the Mangala Kāvyas, the Padāvalīs, the Shyamā and Umā cycles were paeans of praise of gods and goddesses. But, probably, the music of these chants, except where it was touched by that of the courts, was not of a high standard. On the other hand, the Pathan and the Mughal courts had taken up music seriously, and a good deal of accessory values was shed. Not that in Dhrupad and Dhamār (Hori) fine sentiments, religious and lyric, were lacking, but the gods retreated before the monarchs who could excite loyal feelings but not high poetry. In Kheyal, the pieces had to be composed with an ear for improvisation. Later on, words became pegs to hang the melody upon. The public never took kindly to this separation. In the country-side, the old devotional styles were popular, though they were fast losing their pristine quality of directness. At this stage, composers did appear, particularly, in the South. But the prestige of Durbari music was so great in the North that there could be no equivalent to Thyagaraja's Kirtans. Even now, 'songs' have a lower prestige than say 'ālāp' with an audience that has

pretensions to musical culture. Bhajan, Ghazal and Thumri, though they be of Mira Bai, Iqbal or Kadar Piya are banned from pucca programmes. The sophisticated audience of the North would much rather listen to the mispronounced and half-muttered half a line of Sadarang spread over half an hour or to a Tirana that has no meaning and go in raptures over its execution than waste their appreciation over the loveliest lyrics of Kabir or Bihari. Though the state of things marked the self-government of music as a distinct art, it could not have any future, as it was eating up its own resources. Autarchy had to be broken in the interests of freedom ; the development of music necessitated composers. Tagore's contribution to Indian music is to be primarily understood in this context of the dynamics of growth.

Tagore's own development as a composer has largely followed the needs of the development of Indian musical forms. This is as it should be. A great man cannot but repeat in himself all the vital stages of life and culture. He pushes some ahead and releases the energies of others. But he exploits them all. There are at least four milestones in the history of his composition. In the first, he was following the behests of practice and writing poems to well-known melodic patterns. Conformity was the rule. Even then, the earlier pieces had two elements of novelty. They gave little scope to 'tāns' and 'kartabs'. Much of this restriction was due to the Dhrupadic structure of the songs, to the richness of the poetry, and to the peculiar deficiency of the language as he found it then in the matter of vowels, the preponderance of consonants and abrupt endings of words. Besides, they would describe the dramatic features of the story-element, e. g., the songs of *Bālmiki-Pratibha* and *Māyār Khela*. Hindusthani music also possesses elements of surprise in permutations and combinations of notes, in *murchhanā*, *chhut*, *gamak*, etc, Among these the first, viz., Kartab-tāns are almost excluded in Dhrupad. So the others alone can be used, and they were used. But, and this is the

touch of Tagore, when these existing dramatic conventions were not sufficient, Tagore was not averse to the adaptation of European airs for his purpose. It was of course more than mere passive adaptation, it was an authentic act of creation. Pluck out the words of these songs with 'foreign' airs, and you get the skeleton of the Indian rāga, often in a different key. Yet, taking all the songs that he wrote before, say 1900, the general feature was an elastic orthodoxy rather than a controlled heterodoxy. In fact, the musicians and the 'cultured' audience had not yet cursed Tagore with bell, book and candle ; nay, his Brahmo Sangeets were popular with the Ustāds.

Gradually, however, Tagore's heresy was peeping out. He was blending airs, mixing up castes. From its early days, the Indian musical system has been classified into 'jātis', 'rāgas' and 'rāginis'. The essence of the scheme is the fixation of the genus and the species according to structures. In the 'ṭhāṭs', as the genus may be called, the bare essentials are indicated in a sequence of notes, and any aberration therefrom in the development is regarded as an offence against basic values. At the same time, however, latitude has always been given to admixture in the execution of characteristic phrases of two or three cognate 'rāgas' or species within the same 'ṭhāṭ' or genus. This was at once a concession to the physical limitations of the voice, to the inner impulsion to cross artificial barriers and a recognition of emotive affinities. In Darbari Kanada and Bahar the difference in 'ṭhāṭ' is transcended by a fundamental similitude that comes out in tāns. The various texts (Shastras, as they are called) did come to terms with the realities of the situation and recognised these alliances with trans-frontier rāgas. Throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, practising artists had been preparing all kinds of mixtures of species. Some like Jhinjit-Khambaj became very popular, a number like Gaud-sarang, Nat-kedar, Puriya-dhyansri were taken unto the bosom of the elite, while others like Bhairon-bahar, Eman-bilawal remained to prove the unique virtuosity of certain families. It is no exaggeration to say that

there are few species in Hindusthani music which are anthropologically pure, though the Ustāds are always swearing by purity. Tagore demolished this myth by the very principle of the growth and the very practice of the art of music. Objectively, that principle had remained long in the dark, and become radioactive. In this way, at least twenty new species or Rāginis have been sponsored by him and their survival value tested.

The third period marks the consummation of Tagore's experiments. His choice was clear : either he would remain content with what he had achieved in the way of new combinations of melodies and wait for time to antiquate the opposition to his novelties and be classed in future with the master-composers, like Tānsen or Thyagaraja, or he would push on to the creation of further forms driven by the urge of newer drives. A genuine revolutionary that he is, he could not but take the next step forward, even if it was further away from the ken of the classicist's approval. The drives came from 'folk-songs', as they were called, but which were highly sophisticated in their way. Hindusthani music was always conscious of their separate existence and called them 'Deshi' or 'Artha-sangit'. In other words, they were laden with literary values. From one point of view, they were like the native states where Indians were Indians as they would like to be known by non-Indians. Their stress was on words and their meaning, on devotion and its accessories, love and its aphrodisiacs, and life with its realities. Music as such was a subordinate factor there ; only a means to an end. In short, these Deshi songs had both a popular and a collective appeal in its meaning-side. But they had certain other qualities which the Mārga or the Durbari style did not possess. Springing from that great protestant movement of the Middle Ages, the Deshi-songs partook of the directness of individual approach to the Divine, i.e. without the help of intermediaries. Therefore, their spirit was not only congenial to Tagore's spirit of dissent, but his philosophy of life. As a rāga in the Mārga style was a generic structure of notes and thus disregardful of

individual emotions that a song could convey, its protest in the Deshi style would naturally take the line of particularising the generalities of classical modes through words that conveyed specific meanings. Two results ensued therefrom. First : instead of the prolonged development of a mode, as in 'ālāp' or in 'asthāyī,' the infinite variety of the mode was expressed in different compositions that conformed to the essentials of the rāga and yet did justice to its shades of differences. It is, as it were, instead of Bhairavi being spread over on one plane and over one stretch of long period, its multiplicity would be specified in a dozen songs in Bhairavi, differing between themselves in moods and nuances and communicating the distinctions through appropriate meanings in words. The second result was the birth of the art of composition as such. As has been indicated above, the art of composition had fallen to a low level, even in Bengal, where the poetic tradition was richer than elsewhere and closely allied to some form of music or other. But in the British period, barring one or two men, and they too insufficiently, no writer of songs had either fully considered the musical value of words or the verbal appropriateness of musical feeling. The heaviest rāgas had light bodies and the lightest rāgas had armours of medieval knights. No wonder that the Lady of music remained in the Ogre's castle. Tagore released her from the bondage through the tactics of proper equipments. His Todi and Malhar clothed dignified sentiments and his light songs got their Khambaj and Pilu. The Bengali language offered difficulties, no doubt, but they were surmounted easily by the wizard who had in more than one sense created that language itself. Here came the importance of the Deshi melodic patterns. They demanded simplicity and directness ; individual and specific moods ; and an upsurge of feeling. Tagore provided them with all that they wanted. If in the meanwhile they took him away from well-trodden familiar paths, he could quote the lessons of music's own history in our land and refer to that superior logic that impels worn-out forms to seek life

from the soil or be damned otherwise. Was not Dhrupad, as we know it, the regional style of Agra and Gwalior ?—Was not Deshi itself a classical mode ?

In the last phase, through which he is passing, his musical genius discovered new dimensions. Throughout his long career, he has been throwing up musical dramas in which the members of his family, at first, and later on, the gifted members of Santiniketan were rendering him every assistance. From the time of *Fālguni*, Calcutta has been looking forward every year to the Santiniketan festivals in which dignified acting, beautiful dresses, artistic scenes would be harmonised by lovely music. India has also had her lavish share in the glory of this mosaic. Here also Tagore's development has been striking. What might be called the preponderance of music has been controlled by dance and drama into perfect proportions. The organic integrity of *Chitrangada* cannot be split up into component parts. It is something more than an opera, as is usually understood ; the subtlety of its sentiments and the extreme refinement of its lyrics would in any case raise it to a higher level. Within the limitations of Indian music, the drama is fully conveyed. Dance and dresses contribute to the totality of its musical effect. Indian music has at last corresponded, as far as it can, to the subtleties of Indian life.

I have deliberately used the word 'composer' and 'composition' in this essay, and the reason is important. Tagore is no mere writer of songs, as many would wrongly believe. Excepting some of the very early period, he has seldom written a poem to be set to music at leisure. Poems and their musical forms come to him *complete*, at one and the same moment. This is possible because he is an executant himself, and of no mean order. The process of fusion has been further facilitated by the fact that his poetry has crossed similar hurdles to reach open spaces ; it has released similar energies in literature ; and both have been impelled by a common urge to freedom. A composer's final test is the aptness of the fit between form and content.

Separately, the musical pattern should have as high a distinction as the poetical. That is to say, each is valuable *per se*. No appraisement of the place of Tagore's compositions in the history of Indian music need take away anything from their individual achievements either as poetry or as musical pattern. Here I can only point out the exquisite workmanship of the latter in the context of the whole composition.

OLD MEMORIES

By Indira Devi Chaudhuri[1]

IN my school days, I remember we used to sing a song beginning with the lines :

> O Memory, sweet Memory !
> When all things fail, we fly to thee.

Unfortunately, by the time all other things fail, Memory, our last refuge, begins to fail also. And perhaps it is just as well.

Some people's lives don't seem to make much impression on themselves, and I believe I belong to that category. Yet looking back, I can hardly remember a time when our family life did not include my uncle Rabindranath, and when we were not influenced by him, in our work and play, in our music, reading and festive gatherings. I am afraid children are apt to take greatness for granted, and it doesn't make much difference to them, even when seen at close quarters. And besides, he wasn't so great then as to make the whole world kin. So we had him more to ourselves.

I remember going with him to Bankim Chatterjee's house as a little girl, and accompanying him to meetings and such like places, though what I could possibly understand about it all, Heaven alone knows. You know the way children stick to those who are fond of them.

Another early memory is connected with going to Jessore with a family party bent on seeking a bride for my uncle, and the various houses we visited. Jessore has always been the happy hunting-ground for brides of the Tagore family, as being a *Pirali*[2] colony ; and I must say the selection made mostly by maid-

1 Daughter of Satyendranath Tagore, the Poet's elder brother.—*Ed.*

2 Particular sect of Brahmins.

servants in former days, did credit to their taste. Jessore happens to be my maternal home also, and this visit will always stand out as one of the rare occasions when I have seen the countryside of Bengal; and to mention another purely personal and trivial incident, when two of my uncles taught me how to tell time by the clock!

Music has always played and still plays an important part in our family, and some of my earliest recollections cluster round that magical art. My mother had that supreme gift in a woman called centrality, and was able to gather round her the diverse members of a large joint-family and make them co-operate in many a private theatrical performance; so that we almost lisped in songs. I still remember singing a song as a mere child, the first line of which may be roughly translated as—"Speak to me of love no more"—which came out of one of my uncle Jyotirindra's dramas (where are those once popular dramas now?—Consigned to the limbo of oblivion, alas!) and which rejoiced in the title of Italian Jhinjhit,—much to the amused astonishment of my listeners, I presume. But what can you expect of children brought up on the love-ditties of Bhanusinha?[1] Dinendranath[2] also put his foot into it badly once, when his grandfather overheard him singing one of the latter's own compositions, not quite suited to his age. But children are only pretty Pollies after all, and it is for their elders to mind their p.'s and q.'s before them!

In his early youth Rabindranath was not averse to singing English songs, though he never took any special training. But then in what subject has he ever undergone the usual training, if you come to think of it? I remember that, when an obstreperous school-boy once pleaded as his excuse for failing that Rabindranath had not passed the Matriculation, I replied:

1 Pseudonym under which Rabindranath published one of his earliest books of lyrics (1885).—*Ed.*

2 The Poet's grand-nephew, who wrote the notations of most of his songs. One of the most gifted musicians of his time.—*Ed.*

"It may be that Rabindranath hasn't passed the Matric, but not passing that examination won't turn one into a Rabindranath !" However, that is by the way. My memory in this case goes as far back as England in the seventies, when we were tiny tots, and my uncle used to sing "Won't you tell me Mollie darling", and "Darling, you are growing old" to us. Perhaps these songs were then the rage, as "O my darling Clementine" or something else may be now. But I had better not date myself by mentioning names. Later on, when I was old enough to accompany him on the piano, "Come into the garden, Maud", "Goodbye sweetheart, goodbye", and "In the gloaming" were some of the songs he used to sing,—the old fashioned names of which will probably evoke a supercilious smile on the lips of post-Victorian singers, if there be any such who happen to have even heard of them. The old songs are still there, but who will sing them now, —or ever ? Even a piece of paper, with care, will outlast the longest life. The simple airs of Scotch and Irish ballads have influenced his music to a certain, though very little, extent ; and he has also set words to some of them, after the necessary adaptation.

Rabindranath had a high tenor voice in his younger days, and his natural pitch was the key of F ; whereas nowadays D sharp (with a short d !—I have often wondered why the Bengali name for that note was never considered good enough !) seems to be the usual pitch for amateurs ; and girls prefer a note or two (or even three) lower than the normal middle C. Which reminds one of the old story in *Punch*, in which the singer begins the song "Deeper and deeper still" in the key of C, and ends somewhere around A flat,—having evidently taken his words too literally !

Though Rabindranath has been composing songs from childhood, yet his former output bears no comparison in quantity with the everlasting fount of song which seems to have been released after his return from Europe in or about 1912, and which has been welling forth unremittingly almost to this day. Even the stalwart Dinendranath was unequal to the stupendous

task of coping in print with this unending flow of composition ; though the pains he has taken to note down the major portion has earned him the gratitude of all Bengali music-lovers and admirers of the Poet. I have done a fair share of notation in my time also ; and it was one of my standing quarrels with Dinendranath, that in the matter of old songs I refused to admit his authority, though as far as my uncle's modern songs went, I was ready to bow to his decision. It is a well-known fact that Rabindranath is forgetful and cannot reproduce his own compositions correctly, so that a constant controversy rages round the correct rendering and notation of his songs. Though the gap left by Dinendranath is impossible to fill, yet it is heartening to see that music-lovers are not wanting in Santiniketan, who are persevering and competent enough to carry on his labour of love. The starting of an amateur association in Calcutta, styled the Geetali, with the object of teaching the Poet's songs correctly, is worth mentioning here, as it has received his benediction. Perhaps the tenderest spot in his heart is reserved for his songs.

As the years roll on, variegated pictures flit across the screen of memory, comprising monthly services of the now moribund Adi Brahmo Samaj, where again I accompanied Rabindranath on the organ ; occasional visits to my father on the Bombay side, including the pretty harbour of Karwar, from where my uncle came home to marry ; and the advent of his children, one by one. How fair his eldest daughter Bella was, and how like a wax doll she looked with her curly hair and rosy cheeks, when she came in the carriage one day to fetch me from school, on their return from Darjeeling ! They made their home with us occasionally, and even at Jorasanko my mother assisted at every childbirth, and also looked after the younger children, when they became motherless, years afterwards. Was ever a man so stricken in his family life as Rabindranath, and so glorified in public at the same time ? Most of his children and his only grandson have left him before their time, his only surviving son

is childless, and there will be practically none in future to carry on his name,—that name he has so covered with lustre both at home and abroad.

Then come at random, as we grow older, scenes of more private theatricals, both at Jorasanko and our house, in some of which perhaps we take part. Rabindranath of course has always been a consummate actor, and so were his nephews Gaganendra and Dinendra. Two plays that may be mentioned out of many, are the oft-repeated yet ever-popular *Vālmiki Pratibha*, which is my ideal of what an opera should be ; and the first performance of *Visarjan*, held for the benefit of the University Institute. Most probably the present members of that body are ignorant of the debt they owe to the previous generation. The tuneful opera *Māyār Khela* was also composed in aid of a charitable institution, and its catchy numbers were much appreciated even by Europeans. Then there were the meetings of the Kham-kheyali Club, with its original and artistic decorations of the festive floor. In fact, Art and Music have gone hand in hand throughout Rabindranath's life, and have stamped him as the favourite child that he is of the divine mother Saraswati. It is a pleasure to see his son and daughter-in-law, such worthy followers of his, in the cult and quest of beauty.

Pleasure-trips in my uncle Jyotirindra's steamers should perhaps have been mentioned earlier, but the correct sequence of events does not matter in rambling recollections such as these. Unfortunately, the pleasure was short-lived, as he lived to rue the day when he bought the first hulk as a business proposition. But we were too young then to understand these money matters, and the sweets we used to gorge ourselves with on board were more in our line. I must say river-air does whet one's appetite !

Social gatherings at the Vichitra,—that home of my uncle's which was home to him no longer—bring us down to comparatively modern days. Many of the present generation will remember the pleasant literary and musical evenings that were held there, and the constant stream of friends and visitors that



POET WITH HIS ELDEST SON AND DAUGHTER

flowed towards it, whenever my uncle happened to be in Calcutta. The era of *Sabuj Patra*[1] also must not be forgotten. Bolpur then used to divide the honours with Calcutta, and it is only when Rabindranath went to settle in Santiniketan for good, that he became as it were public property, and more or less a stranger to his own kith and kin. If there is a twinge of jealousy in the above remark, it is only as natural as it is for a child to leave his mother's lap to become a man, and for a man to leave his family circle to become a greater man ; and the greater the man, the greater will be the world for him to conquer and make his own.

Personally speaking,—and one cannot eliminate the first person singular altogether—I shall always account it one of my proudest privileges that some of his loveliest poems,—the triad beginning with "This sea-girt earth that swings in heaven's expanse"—were addressed to me. And in this first and last public tribute of mine, I cannot help associating with me that other one[2] so near and dear to my uncle, who would have responded with such alacrity to a similar call, had he not gone before.

In the evening of his life and ours, what are the qualities that strike one in Rabindranath's personality, and that stand out all the more clearly owing to this very distance ? To put it concisely, I should say his versatility and vitality. It is almost bewildering to think of the manifold facets of human intelligence and activity that have been illumined by the touch of his genius, the wonderful zest and energy which refuse to succumb to the inevitable curse of old age and disease, and the firm faith which continues to believe in the ultimate triumph of good, in the face of overpowering odds.

1 A literary monthly, started in 1914 and edited by the writer's husband, Sj. Pramatha Chaudhury. Many of Rabindranath's writings of that period were first published in it.

2 The reference is to the writer's brother, Sj. Surendranath Tagore, who was closely associated with his uncle's literary activities. He passed away in May 1940.

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So let us leave him, unimpaired in mind, if not in body, crowned with inward glory and the homage of his countrymen. Must such an eye and ear needs become enfeebled, such a hand also lose its cunning?—Verily, inscrutable are the ways of Providence. Life is at once too long and too short, too frail and too tenacious. To end as I began with the words of an old song, the sweet tune of which raises it above the commonplace :

> Meeting and parting, in this world must ever be,
> Meeting and parting,—parting on life's mystic sea.

May he rest in peace here and hereafter !

TAGORE AS SEER AND PROPHET OF ARYA DHARMA

By S. K. Maitra

I THANK the Editor of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* for asking me to write something for the Special Number of his Journal, as it gives me an opportunity of offering my humble tribute to Dr. Tagore on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. Dr. Tagore's genius is so many-sided that it is difficult to choose a subject on which to write on an occasion like this. Ten years ago, on a similar occasion, I chose as the subject of my paper for the *Golden Book of Tagore* his philosophy of personality. To-day, ten years later, when, in fullness of years and richness of spiritual experience, he looks a perfect picture of our ancient Rishis, I can think of no better subject than the one I have put on the top of this page. Yes, it is as seer and prophet of Arya Dharma that Tagore appears to us to-day, and my object in this paper is to exhibit this character of his as revealed in his writings. As the space at my disposal is extremely limited, I propose to confine myself to what we can gather from the volumes of his religious essays and sermons that were published under the titles, respectively, of *Dharma* and *Santiniketan*.

Dr. Tagore has indicated in the essay "The simple Ideal of Religion" in his book *Dharma* what his conception of Arya Dharma is. In sublimity of thought and grandeur of expression, it is difficult to find a better exposition of Arya Dharma than what is presented in this essay. In this essay he says that the ideal of religion is simplicity, not complexity. It is, however, the bane of human civilization that it renders the simplest things most complex. This is nowhere more evident than in religion, where by setting up what are called religious institutions, man has crushed the true religious spirit under a heap of soulless forms.

Why has this been so? The reason is that instead of ourselves conforming to the spirit of religion, we have made religion conform to ourselves. In other words, we have employed religion as a tool, as a mere instrument for the realization of our practical purposes. And it is for this reason that religion, far from being a unifying force, has become a disruptive agency.

How can we prevent this? How can religion be again made a unifying force? The poet's answer may be summed up in these pithy words: If religion becomes a Dharma and ceases to be a mere religion. What, however, is a Dharma? What is its distinguishing feature? The word Dharma is derived from the Sanskrit root dhṛ, to hold. It is therefore that which holds the universe together. If it relates to a part of the universe, if it becomes a matter for this race or that community, then it degenerates into a mere religion, and causes the strifes and discords, the disastrous effects of which we feel only too palpably to-day.

To keep Dharma in its pure state what is necessary is that we should be in perpetual contact with the infinite. We should not erect walls around us so as to prevent the light of the infinite from reaching us. The poet gives here a beautiful example. He says a house is necessary for man, but equally necessary for him is open air. If he wants to cover the whole space with masonry, without leaving any opening for the outside air to enter his house, then the house ceases to be a house and becomes a prison. So also we become merely prisoners of our own conventions if we stop all access to the light of the infinite. This is, in fact, what the institutional religions have done; they have made us prisoners of artificial forms.

A true picture of the ideal of religion we get in the Gāyatrī verse. The poet then gives a magnificent exposition of this verse which every Hindu ought not only to read but also to digest, as the Gāyatrī *mantra* is the most sacred *mantra* of the Vedas. The verse begins with the words ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः. This

portion of the verse is called 'vyāhṛti'. The word 'vyāhṛti' means gathering from all round. It means, as the poet beautifully explains, gathering the *bhūrloka*, *bhuvarloka*, *svarloka*, in other words, the whole universe, within the mind, contemplating oneself as a citizen of the whole universe, and not merely of this or that country. In this way, the poet continues, the true Arya at least once a day places himself in the midst of the sun, the moon and the stars and realizes his essential unity with the whole universe. And while doing so, he utters the *mantra* तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि "We contemplate the glorious light of the god Savitṛ".[1] But on what principle are we to contemplate the glorious light ? What is the thread by which we are connected with the Lord of the universe ? The answer is given in the concluding portion of the verse : धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् "May he direct our intellect !"[2] It is therefore through our intellect that we are to contemplate him. The poet explains this beautifully as follows : "How do we know the light of the sun ? We know it by the rays which the sun itself is giving us. Similarly, we know the generator of the whole universe with the help of the power of the intellect which he has given us—that power by virtue of which I cognize myself as well as everything that goes on in the outer world. This power of the intellect is his gift, and with its help I realize his power in the inmost essence of my being. Just as in the outer world, I realize him as the generator of the *lokas*, so in the inner world, I realize him as the constant director of my intellect. Outside, the world, and inside, my intellect—these two are manifestations of the same power. Knowing this, and realizing in this way the intimate relationship of the universe with my mind and my mind

1 I have faithfully followed the poet's translation of this line, with one exception, and that is that I have translated *bhargas* as 'light' and not as 'power' as the poet has done.

2 It is curious that neither Griffith nor Wilson translated *dhiyah* as intellect. Griffith translated it as 'prayers' and Wilson as 'pious rites'. Wilson, however, has admitted in a footnote that the word may mean also 'intellect'. Sāyaṇa has given two meanings of the word, as 'karmāṇi' and as 'buddhi'.

with Sachchidānanda, I obtain emancipation from all narrowness, selfishness, fear and grief."

From this beautiful interpretation of the meaning of the Gāyatrī *mantra* which, according to the poet, contains the essence of the ideal of religion, we notice two things : Firstly, that the ideal of religion can only be realized if we open out all the windows of our being to the infinite light from above. Secondly, that the medium through which we can communicate with the Infinite Source is our intellect. Of course, we should not interpret the word *intellect* in a narrow sense. It is not merely logical reason but the higher powers of cognition by which alone we can get access to the ultimate mysteries of the universe.

As with knowledge, so also with the practical handling of life's problems, the teaching of our ancient sages was simplicity itself. **सन्तोषं हृदि संस्थाय सुखार्थी संयतो भवेत्**, "The man who wants happiness must place contentment within his heart and practise self-control." The meaning of this is that happiness is not something to be found outside, but is wholly internal. If a man possesses this simplicity which comes from perfect self-control, he can be happy even under the most gloomy outward surroundings.

The way of India, the poet says, has never been to chase after phantoms. She never believed there was any virtue in mere knocking about, in aimless wandering from place to place. What she taught was that we should hold fast to that which is inexhaustible, which is steadfast, which is simple, for it is this which is true, it is this which is eternal. Temporary advantage one may obtain by deviating from the path of simplicity, from the path of truth, but India has always scorned such a temporary advantage :

अधर्मेणैधते तावत् ततो भद्राणि पश्यति ।
ततः सपत्नान् जयति समूलस्तु विनश्यति ॥

"The path of unrighteousness may lead to temporary gains, one

may for the time being prosper, one may even defeat enemies, but it inevitably leads to total destruction."

असतो मा सद्गमय तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय ।

"Lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to the deathless." This is the message of India. The need which she has stressed as our real need is the need of truth, of light, of immortality, not the need of material comforts.

This thought that salvation lies only in steadfastly holding to the One and firmly resisting the temptation of running after impermanent ends, runs through the Essay "The One of ancient India". The poet takes as his text the verse of the Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad (3. 9):

वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येक
स्तेनेदं पूर्णं पुरुषेण सर्व्वम् ॥

The One is silent, like the tree, while everything else is moving. It is permanent, while everything else is temporary ; it is eternal, while everything else is fleeting. This One, which is the Real behind all phenomena, is dearer than the son, dearer than money, dearer than everything :

तदेतत् प्रेयः पुत्रात् प्रेयो वित्तात् ।
प्रेयोऽन्यस्मात् सर्वस्मादन्तरतरं यदयमात्मा ॥

It is the presence of this One which stabilizes the universe, in spite of its unceasing movement and change. It is this which ensures the beauty, the harmony, the grace and sublimity of the world. It is for this reason that the poet said, "When we look at the world surrounded by a network of activity, as a whole, we see that it is fatigueless, untroubled, tranquil, beautiful—that it is not tormented by anxiety or disfigured by marks or oppressed by burdens. How beautiful and charming its morning always is, how sombre and still its midday, how kind and soft its evening, and how generous and unruffled its night ! How is such peace and beauty possible in the midst of so much variety

and effort, how is such perfect music possible in the midst of so much noise ? The only answer is : वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येकः"

The great lesson, therefore, which we learn from our contemplation of the One is this : In the fragmentary is idleness, in the One is beauty, in fragmentariness is discord, in the One is peace. In fragmentariness is death, in the One is immortality. It is for this reason that the Kaṭhopaniṣad said : मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति.

When Yājñavalkya wanted to go to the forest, he proposed to give the whole of his property to his wife Maitreyī. Maitreyī asked him whether the possession of property would give her immortality. On Yājñavalkya's answering that that was not possible, she exclaimed, येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्याम् ("What shall I do with that which will not give me immortality ?").

In the Essay on *Prayer*, the poet shows the contrast between the outlook of India and that of Europe. "Europe," he says, "is constantly demanding land, gold, power, is demanding these so greedily, so terribly that truth, light and immortality, for which mankind has been praying for ever, are gradually hiding themselves from the gaze of Europe, making her crazy. This is the path to destruction, not a path merely, but destruction itself."

He reaffirms in the Essay on *The Preaching of Religion* what he has already stated in *The Ideal of Religion*. "Our Dharma," he declares emphatically, "is not religion, it is not a portion of human nature ; it is not divorced from politics, separated from war, cut off from business, dissociated from daily conduct. It does not confine itself within the walls of a particular portion of society and keep a sentry over its boundaries to prevent the encroachments of recreations and amusements, poetry and literature, science and art. The stages of Brahmacharya, Gārhasthya, Vānaprastha, etc, are so many means of fulfilling religion completely in life, in this world. Religion is not for the satisfaction of our partial needs ; the whole world exists for its fulfilment."

The main point which he stresses here is that Dharma is something which pervades the whole of life. It must dominate

therefore the whole scheme of life, educational, social, political, etc. That is why our ancient sages called the period of education of a man *brahmacharya*. The idea underlying this word is that a man can only truly receive education if he seeks to realize Brahman. Any other kind of education, any education which has for its aim merely mastery over the forces of nature or domination over other countries or other nations, is against the spirit of our Dharma. In Europe it is totally different. There the ideal of education is not the realization of God but the conquest of nature and the subjugation of other countries and races. Their whole scheme of education, including even the games of their children, has been organized with a sole eye to this ideal. That is why it is said that the battles of England are fought in her cricket fields.

In the Essay, *The End of the Year*, the poet says that what we regret as having been lost or as having departed is really not lost, has not really departed, but exists in the eternal and all-pervasive nature of Brahman. "Has everything," says the poet, "only come and gone ? I say this to-day, after silent meditation, 'It is not so, what has come and gone has really not disappeared, but has remaind, O Silent One, fixed within thee ; the flower that has withered has blossomed within thee—nothing which I notice as passing away can ever fall away from thee. To-day in the silence of the darkness of the evening, I feel this stability of the universe in thee.'"

In the Essay on *The New Year*, the poet, taking as his text the verse of the Upaniṣad : को ह्येवान्यात् कः प्राण्यात् यदेष आकाश आनंदो न स्यात् "Who would have cared for the body, who would have cared to live if the sky had not been bliss ?", says that bliss is the central fact of the universe. It is the cementing force that holds the universe together.

The realization of God as Bliss can act as a universal solvent of our troubles and anxieties, our pains and sorrows. It will make us understand how "misery is only a mystery of this bliss, and death also the same."

In the Essay on *Misery* the poet shows that the existence of pain and misery is no indication of the absence of bliss and does not in any way contradict the view that the world is bliss. "Just as," says the poet, "incompleteness is not the opposite of completeness but is only a manifestation of completeness, so also misery, the invariable accompaniment of incompleteness, is not the opposite of bliss but is a part of it. In other words, the completion and fulfilment of misery is not misery but bliss. Misery itself is आनन्दरूपममृतम्."

In fact, if anything, misery is a greater affirmation of bliss than what we call happiness. It is because mankind has realized this truth very deeply, that it has always adored misery, not happiness. All the great saints "have been Avatārs of misery, not slaves of the goddess Lakṣmī brought up in ease and luxury."

Therefore, the poet says, we have always to bear in mind that "the glory of imperfection is misery ; misery is its wealth, misery is its capital. Man is man because he achieves truth through misery. His powers are limited, no doubt, but God has not made him a beggar. He does not get things by begging, but he has to get them through pain." He continues, "If we have to give anything to God, what shall we give ? There is no satisfaction in giving Him that which is His ; we have to give Him that which is peculiarly our own, namely, misery. This misery He will return, filled to the brim with His *ānanda*, that is, with Himself. Otherwise, how can He pour His bliss ? If we had not this vessel of our own, how could he have poured His nectar ?"

The Essay *What then ?* is the longest and perhaps the most important essay of the book *Dharma*. In it the poet gives us a general idea of the spiritual outlook of ancient India. He starts by pointing out a fundamental difference between the modern European and our ancient Indian outlook. The European takes this life and this world very seriously ; he is not for yielding an inch of ground but to fight to the last for his rights. His ideal is to "die in harness". To renounce the world is for him the

height of cowardice. His whole scheme of life is based upon the idea that this life and this world are the most real things and that true manhood consists in making as full use of these as possible.

The ancient Indian outlook was just the opposite of this. It did not believe this life to be the most real thing. On the contrary, it always wanted to remind us of the extreme transitoriness of this life. Its motto was : गृहीत इव केशेषु मृत्युना धर्ममाचरेत् "Perform Dharma, constantly thinking that you are pulled by the hair by death".

But it is one thing to say that this life with its innumerable relations should not be regarded as the ultimate goal of human endeavour and quite another to express a contempt for it and to treat it as unreal. Our ancient forefathers, although they emphasized the transitoriness of life and the folly of clinging to it to the last, did not show any contempt for it or advocate the renouncing of it. They knew that it was not possible to ignore the innumerable relations woven by life, and that the only way to rise above them was to go through them. Any hasty attempt to escape them would only end in disaster.

For this reason the poet says, "In fact, the spirit of accepting the world and the spirit of rejecting it, bondage and renunciation, are equally true. In the union of the two lies perfection. Śiva is the image of renunciation and Annapūrṇā that of enjoyment. When the two unite, we have the joy of fullness. Whenever there occurs in our life any difference between Śiva and Śivaṇī, whenever bondage and emancipation are not set up together, whenever there is a conflict between attachment and renunciation, we have the root of all want of peace, all misery."

In fact, this only proves that man is not to be judged merely from one point of view or from the standpoint of one particular end. He transcends all particular ends that we may have in view. If we treat him merely from the military point of view, we may make an excellent soldier of him, but we shall be starving a great part of him. So is it if we treat him as a

machine for the production of goods. We may create excellent workmen but the soul of man will be crushed. This message of our ancient sages the poet has made his own, and it runs through the whole of his writings, as I have shown in my paper *Rabindranath and the Philosophy of Personality*, contributed to the *Golden Book of Tagore.*

In fact, as Bhartṛhari has expressed in his famous lines :

प्राप्ताः श्रियः सकलकामदुघास्ततः किम् ।
न्यस्तं पदं शिरसि विद्विषतां ततः किम् ॥
सम्पादिताः प्रणयिनो विभवैस्ततः किम् ।
कल्पस्थितास्तनुभृतां तनवस्ततः किम् ॥

all the ends for which human beings have worked so hard and for which they often quarrel and fight among themselves, are really nothing, compared with the supreme end of realizing their selves. To each of these paltry ends, we may put the question, 'What then ?' as not one of them can afford abiding satisfaction to the human soul.

But the poet wants to impress upon us one great truth. It is that if it is of supreme importance to us to realize ourselves completely, to obtain perfect emancipation, it is equally important that we should pass through a strict discipline of our lives. Indeed, no salvation is possible without strict discipline. This is why our ancient forefathers prescribed minute rules for the discipline of our lives. Now, of course, only those rules remain, only the cage is there, the bird has flown, the end for which those rules were framed is completely forgotten. This is no doubt a tragedy, but it is equally tragic if we only care for the end and fight shy of the strict discipline without which the end can never be realized. Even in Europe, where freedom is valued so highly, people slave away their lives in workshops and factories, in the army, the navy and the air force. The poet therefore says, "As in Europe it is only through subjection that freedom manifests itself, so in our country also, the path

of freedom has been indicated through a process of strict rules and restraints."

At the end of the Essay he expresses his faith in Arya Dharma in words which ought to be inscribed in the hearts of every true son and daughter of our Aryabhumi : "There was a time when the sages of India were engaged in worshipping Brahman, when through the whole organization of Aryan society—in State affairs, in warfare, in commerce, literature, worship—the note of Brahman resounded, the spirit of emancipation showed itself, through action. The whole fabric of Indian society, as it were, proclaimed with one voice, येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्याम् 'What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal ?' If we think that that voice has for ever become silent, then why are we wasting our time and energy in supplying materials for this dead society ? In that case, it would be better to imitate other nations in every matter—for it is certainly more wise to be active and to try to be something than to carry a load of purposeless futility. But this we will never admit. Our nature revolts at it. Even if we sink into the abyss of misery, our innermost region is so constituted that it can never accept any incomplete right as our highest gain. Even now if some devotee sounds a note on the harp of his life which is above everything we ask for, or possess, in this world, it will be resounded immediately on the chord of our heart, and we cannot help it. . . . The power and wealth of European civilization has charmed us, and a feeble imitation of it has given a great push to our desire for pomp and show. It is blowing its trumpets quite close to our gates, but he who has an intimate knowledge of our true life is aware that the auspicious family conch-shell has not been silenced by the reproach of this outward pomp and glitter. When the hired martial music returns to the fort, the homely conch-shell still proclaims in the sky the happy festival. We acknowledge and proclaim with great energy the efficacy of English politics, English social and commercial methods, but our hearts are really not drawn towards them.

For their note hurts the greatest of all notes that we have heard—our inner soul refuses to acknowledge it."

In the collections of sermons published under the title "Santiniketan", we find the same high note, the same deep respect for Arya Dharma which inspired his earlier book *Dharma*. But we notice one difference. There is a growing influence of Vaiṣṅava thought, and the poet is more and more drawn towards the principle of Love. We notice this most strikingly in the sermon on *Prayer* (*Santiniketan*, First Series), where he gives an interpretation of Maitreyī's famous saying from the standpoint of the principle of love, which is very different from the interpretations of it which he has given in *Dharma*. In this sermon the poet says, in regard to Maitreyī's saying येनाहं नामृता स्याम् किमहं तेन कुर्याम्, "Where do we find the touch of immortality in things mortal ? Where there is love. In this love we get a taste of the infinite. It is love that, casting the shadow of the infinite, keeps the old perpetually young and does not acknowledge death." He further says that it is significant that this enunciation of the principle of love is put into the mouth of a woman.

This principle of love animates also his sermon on *Doubt* (Same Series). In a remarkable passage of this sermon he says, "When the cry of doubt becomes a truth within us, that day we cannot rest content with the views of sects or the arguments of philosophy or the word of the Scripture ; that day we realize in a moment that there is no way for us save that of love ; that day our prayer becomes, 'O Lord of the Universe, make thy appearance in the light of love'."

There are certain other aspects of religious life also, not dealt with in the earlier work, which are discussed in *Santiniketan*. One of these is renunciation (tyāga). In the sermon on *Renunciation* (First Series), the poet says that renunciation is not a bare negation, not a mere void, but the fullness of power. "When the minor has not attained majority, he has no power of gift or sale ; he has only the more trivial right of enjoyment, not the greater right of renunciation. When we are in respect of any property

in that condition where we have the right only to save and not to distribute, we have really no right to such property. It is for this reason that Christ said that it was very difficult for the rich to obtain salvation. For whatever wealth they cannot renounce binds them—and the greater this bondage, the greater their difficulties."

Love, again, is the theme of the two sermons, *Love* (First Series) and *Love's Right* (Third Series). In the latter sermon the poet says, "That man wants to make love to God—is this also a sign of his supreme madness of excessive ambition ? An indication of his uncontrolled arrogance ? But there is no trace of arrogance in it. He who is mad with love for God is humble ; he stands behind everybody and considers himself blessed if he gets the dust of the feet of those who are courtiers in God's court of love."

In the sermons on *Emancipation in the World* and *Emancipation in Society* (Fourth Series), the poet introduces a new idea, namely, that what man wants is not emancipation but bondage. Emancipation, in fact, leads to newer and newer forms of bondage. In the sermon on *Emancipation in Society* the poet expresses this very beautifully : "If I say that man wants emancipation, I shall be telling a lie. Much more than emancipation, man wants bondage. He is crying for the privilege of being in bondage to that which will give him unlimited bondage. He says, 'O Supreme Love, you are dependent upon me, when shall I be dependent upon you ? When will there be a complete union of dependence with dependence. Where I am haughty, proud, independent, there I am sick, there I am futile. O Lord, save me by making me dependent, humble' " (Fourth Series, p. 48). This is the Vaiṣṇava ideal, the ideal not of emancipation but of bondage to God.

In the sermon on *The Differenceless* (Fourth Series), the poet deals with one of the most difficult problems of the Vedānta, namely, that of the passage from the differenceless Brahman to the infinite variety of the world. To explain this difference as being

due to Māyā is really begging the question, for the same difficulty arises in connection with the origin of Māyā. The poet's solution of the difficulty is as follows. "The Upaniṣads have solved the problem by saying आनन्दाद्ध्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते 'From the bliss of Brahman all that exists has arisen'. It is his desire, his bliss, not any external force. In this way, after finishing the path of difference, when we reach the Differenceless, that is, Pure Bliss, our path curves and comes back to the differences. But we then see these differences in and through Bliss, and therefore there is no bondage. Action then becomes the action of bliss and is saved by discarding all desire for fruits—the world becomes a world of bliss. Karma then ceases to be ultimate, the world ceases to be ultimate ; only bliss becomes ultimate. Thus, emancipation leads us to union, non-attachment takes us to love."

In the sermon on *Two* (Fourth Series) the poet takes for his text the verse of the Īśopaniṣad :

सपर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रणम् ।
अस्नाविरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम् ॥
कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयम्भू-
र्याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् व्यदधात् शाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ॥

and points out that there are two main ideas in this verse, indicated respectively, by the two verbs पर्यगात् and व्यदधात्. The first conveys the idea of Being and the second that of Doing. Being and Doing are the two significant ideas about God, and His nature reveals itself in the constant oscillation from Being to Doing and from Doing to Being. His aspect of Being is indicated by the neutral adjectives शुक्रम्, अकायम्, etc., and that of Doing by the masculine adjectives कवि, मनीषिन्, परिभू, etc. As with the twofold aspect of God, so also with the twofold aspect of man. We have also a side of being and a side of doing. "We also are and do. The more our being becomes free from impediments and perfect, the more will our doing become



POET DURING THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT

beautiful and appropriate. What gives perfection to our being? Sinless purity. Through non-attachment, be free from the bondage of desire—be pure, be unaffected. In that realization of Brahman the more your being becomes perfect, the more you become all-pervasive through your unrestrained, sinless mind, the more you will acquire the right to enter into everything, the more will you make the world a poem and your mind a kingdom, the more will you acquire an empire over the outer world as well as the inner; in other words, the more the sovereignty of the soul is evident, the more will you feel that within you dwells an abode of emancipation."

In the sermon, named *Three-Storied* (Sixth Series), the poet speaks of three distinct cultural stages of man—natural, moral and spiritual. At the first stage, nature is everything for us. All our inclinations, our thoughts, our actions are directed towards nature. Even our gods assume the shape of natural forces. We treat them as external and try to appease them with sacrifices and with offerings of food and other things. Then slowly a disillusionment comes upon us, we begin to feel that nature cannot give us what we want, and a revolt against nature gradually gains volume within us. At that stage, we discard the external world and place ourselves in our inner sanctuary. We begin to treat as insignificant the pain, the misery, the want which puts fetters upon us. We begin to put under severe restraint our desires and inclinations. This is the stage of morality. But then we realize that in the inner world there is not merely a complicated system of restraints but there is something positive, namely, the light of Ānanda which illumines the inner as well as the outer world. This is the stage which the poet calls spiritual. The nature of this stage is thus described by him: "Then the conflict between the inner and the outer disappears. Then not victory, but bliss, not struggle but play, not difference but unity, not I but all, then neither outer nor inner, but only Brahman is there—तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिः"

In the sermon on *Death* (Sixth Series) the poet says that

the ordinary man of the world wants to worship God without making any sacrifices, without disturbing in any way the routine of his life. He wants, in other words, to serve both God and Mammon at the same time. But this sort of cleverness will not do. If we want to serve God, we must be prepared to give up everything for Him. Death is nothing but a compulsory way of making us give up everything, for it is a sundering of all the ties that bind us to this world. If we are to be reborn in God, we must tear ourselves away from everything that we have in this world. That is why death is a necessary condition of rebirth. The poet therefore says, "Once we have to die completely. It is only then that we can be reborn in God. We have to die wholly and completely. I must know this very clearly that, so far as the life that I had is concerned, I am dead. I am not that man—I have not a particle of that which I had in that life. I am dead, so far as my wealth, my fame, my comfort is concerned ; I am only living in God." Death, therefore, with the poet is rebirth in God.

I am afraid limitations of space make it impossible for me to present to the readers many other gems of thought that lie scattered in these sermons. They are, in fact, a veritable mine of spiritual treasures, and, I may add, spiritual treasures of our Arya Dharma. The poet, in fact, shows himself here not merely as a poet but as one of the greatest seers and prophets of Arya Dharma.

TAGORE AT EIGHTY

By Annada Sankar Ray

FOUR years ago I met the Poet in a boat on the Atrai river. He had come from Patisar and was awaiting the train. Later we came up to the station platform together and got into the same compartment. Never before had I had Rabindranath to myself. I remarked a new beauty in his face. I saw it again last year at Santiniketan. It is the beauty that flowers in the life of an artist when he transcends all earthly desires in a true detachment from the world. In him it is united with the mature serenity of his declining age, the "all passions spent" tranquillity of the autumn, reflected on his brow which is framed with white hair like autumnal *kas* grass. I had not liked him so well before ; he had not seemed so beautiful. It was to show himself thus that he needed to live so long. And if life is self-revelation there is need of his living yet longer. Perhaps this is why the Rishis said : "Let us see a hundred autumns ; ·let us live a hundred autumns."

As he draws near to death his fear of it diminishes. He seems to have heard the indistinct murmur of the sea beyond the estuary of his life. The poetry he writes nowadays reflects this. Even though linked with bodily suffering it brings him happiness. Unafraid, unattached, cleansed, he partakes of the joy of this realisation, the crowning joy of life. It was of this that Browning wrote :

> Grow old along with me,
> The best is yet to be—

It comes to us when, having got ready to go, we await conveyance. What is to be taken along has been got together ; what is to be left behind has been put in order. No confusion remains, within or without. There is no remorse for anything left untidy ; there is no regret for anything left unfinished. Staying a day

or two longer does not interest him ; neither is he eager to go. He loves humanity and humanity loves him. He cannot break off this relationship suddenly.

Though he is not eager to go he feels ashamed at times of being alive. The gradual fading of the great hopes he cherished for humanity bewilders and perplexes him. He feels to the core of his heart the depths to which humanity has fallen. Where is the Germany that was so dear to him, the Germany that accorded him a royal reception ? Where is the Japan that was even more dear to him ? And England ? The England he honoured from childhood, the England whose respect and recognition brought him world fame in his middle age ? He has had to witness the downfall and destruction of these civilised nations. And his unfortunate country ! His concern for his country is mournful, a lament at times almost delirious with grief. There is nothing to be proud of, nothing to hope for ; there is only the humiliation of the passing days, the pain of existence. Still he trusts India, trusts Gandhi. The young of all countries, the newcomers, have his blessings always. He has an undying faith in the inexhaustible youth of the world. I got no satisfactory reply when I asked him whether he still believed in God. But he believes in the inherent resilience of nature and in the abiding goodness of man.

Though the evening of his life is overcast with clouds he continues to shine with unabated intensity. His last days, like those of Goethe and Tolstoy, are filled with a varied activity. Younger writers admit that even at this age he puts them to shame every day with the volume of his writing. But that is not the only thing he does. He asked me whether I painted and was disappointed to hear I did not, as though there were no joy equal to it, as though everyone who tried, could. This time I myself saw him with his drawing materials. He said that he could express himself with a brush in a way that he could not through writing. He is attracted to it like an old man to a young wife. If editors did not constrain him to write, perhaps

he would prefer to paint. The stroke of his brush is strong and vigorous despite his dimming sight. What he paints is in one sense more precious than his writing for in it we see him as he really is today. He writes from force of habit and it is bound to be somewhat hackneyed. With painting, it is different. It seems to me that different mediums of expression have suited him at different ages. He still composes songs but we find him less in them than in his pictures. Fifteen years ago he was to be found more in his songs than in his prose. Poetry is of course his life-long companion. But his poetry too is becoming abstract like his paintings. He advised me to write nursery rhymes. Bengali poetry at its most natural is to be found in nursery rhymes. He explained it all to me in such a way that I became an easy convert though I have not yet tried writing them. The rhymes he has written are his pictures in another form. One feels that he is sucking the honey of pure sound as he does that of pure line. He does not trouble himself about the sense. In his second childhood he delights as children delight in line for its own sake, in sound for the sake of sound. But these creations of his are neither meaningless nor unintelligible. In his painting the thing that strikes the eye most is his force ; it is the force that was prehistoric man's. In his rhymes it is his wonder that impresses, the delighted surprise with which primitive man first joined sound to sound. Both his pictures and his rhymes express the unconscious mind. It is as though he allowed this mind, the mind of a hundred thousand years ago which dwells beneath the modern minds of all of us, to come up and express itself.

He writes, he paints, he composes songs, he considers the decor of dance presentations. I have heard that privately he conducts experiments in cooking and gives homeopathic and biochemic medical advice. This activity is a life-long habit. At Shelaidah I heard that once he buried some fish in an attempt to make a new kind of manure. It rotted and the smell nearly drove the people from their village. Similarly when his son

was to farm, sending him to America did not satisfy him, he bought or was going to buy an entire sandbank for him to cultivate. At the Shelaidah office I read some letters of his pertaining to the zemindary. In them he revealed himself as a very capable landowner. Though they were well written there was no trace of the literary man in them. I have seen an example of his zemindary management at Patisar and I have witnessed his concern for the welfare of his tenants. His tenants themselves have told me that they love him and shall never forget him. I recall one of the stories of his youth that I heard from an old man. After his father's death the tenants brought him various presents at the time of the *sradh* ceremony. As it was the custom he accepted them on the first day. On the second, however, he gave them all back. "How shameful !" he exclaimed to their astonishment, "It is my father's *sradh* and I accept gifts from you !" It is unlikely that a stranger announcement was ever made by an Indian landowner. It is only natural that his tenants should respect him. At Atrai the Poet told me, "The tenants when they came said that as they had not had the good fortune to see the prophet they would take a look at me."

If his tireless industry puts Rabindranath on a level with Goethe and Tolstoy there remains a fundamental difference between them. They progress through their work like rivers, flowing forward without pausing. Rabindranath's progress is like the flight of a bird. He wings about the sky and comes back to his nest.

> At the end of my song let me
> Be able to return to the refrain—

This is the voice, not of Europe, but of India. The *sādhanā* of Rabindranath returns repeatedly to its source. In an inner recess of his heart there is a refuge where he nests. To it he has returned again and again before setting out afresh. At every step he has harmonised his nest with the sky. Posterity will find a deep consistency in his beginning and his end, his sunrise

and his sunset. Such constancy, such unity, will not be found in the life of any other man of his times.

From one point of view this is a limitation. His nest does not allow the bird to fly far. He must return to it every night. In Rabindranath's life there is fullness and richness but his flight-range is not limitless though the sky he flies in is. The refrain of his life's song reiterates the eternal. The fault is not his alone, it is his country's. The scope of our wings is restricted physically and mentally if not rhetorically. We run forward and back ; we cannot go out of sight. On the other hand, unswerving progress also has its drawbacks. There is no peace in it. Neither the last days of Goethe nor those of Tolstoy were peaceful. Defeats, victories, hesitations and doubts, anxieties and problems swirled about them. If such internal conflicts exist in Rabindranath they are held firmly in check. Thanks to the teaching he received from his father and from nature, he remains imperturbable even when outside conflicts cast their shadows upon him. The injustices and cppressions of the contemporary worl·l scene afflict him but cannot upset him, for the peace of his nest is his armour.

This inner armour of his has saved him again and again ; never has he lost his footing or drifted from his moorings. It is so strong that even at eighty his conversation is never incoherent or his pronouncements untimely. Whatever he says he says well, with feeling and wit. He still uses alliteration and simile. Puns and humorous sallies come naturally to him. Though his body is feeble there is no trace of it in his mind. His memory is failing and sometimes he makes mistakes but his fancy is as rich as ever, his intelligence as refined, his politeness as impeccable, his kindness as spontaneous. Time has not misted his intellect and his wisdom is bright and unfaded. His inner armour has saved him in his old age from the greatest of all shames—senility.

Rabindranath is a busy man. In the Upaniṣads it is written : *Desire to live and labour a hundred years.* Engaged still in his labours he is about to complete his eightieth year. Yet

he is a man of leisure too. Whenever I have gone to him he has received me as though he had any amount of it. He has talked with me as though time hung heavy on his hands. But not for long. Someone else's turn comes in a few minutes. Actually he has no time at all ; he works incessantly. Yet he has created an atmosphere of holiday about him. There is no hurry or rush. I was unable to discover the source of this leisure. Perhaps when one has become truly free work no longer binds. One works but work is like play, Rabindranath is a free man, if not spiritually, at least mundanely. Unbound, his heart is on holiday.

Ordinarily, conservatism increases with age. With Rabindranath, the reverse has been true. Being a liberated spirit, he is free from prejudice. I have heard that one can talk to him on any subject, even promiscuity. In "The Laboratory", a short story published last year, I found proof of it. No modern writer is more modern or more daring than he. His artistry is such that nothing unhealthy is awakened in the mind. Rabindranath's armour has protected him here also. He was not always so unbiased. His preference for purity was at one time deeply rooted. With the liberation of his intellect his prejudices have fallen away. But he has not surrendered his armour. On the contrary, it has been because of it that his mind has been able to free itself. As the body, unless it is well-knit and hardy, cannot bear the burden of age so the mind cannot dispense with its shackles unless its core is well-shielded and firm. Thus in his writing of free verse he can disregard the rules because he has completed his apprenticeship to rhyme and meter. A master of rhyme he can choose not to use it. Behind his apparent freedom is the discipline of a life-time. He has earned the right to take liberties with impunity.

Rabindranath's life is the story of the flowering of the hundred-petalled lotus of his genius. As each petal opened bonds fell away. Sitting on the shore of completion he awaits final release—the last ferry.

(*Translated from the original Bengali by* Lila Ray)

A POET'S SIGHT

By Amiya Chakravarty

I

RABINDRANATH was saying :

"What lies before me I do not know. Looking at the road I have travelled, I feel surprised. At each bend came the unforeseen, scenes changed, fresh moments emerged carrying life's mystery.

"Not inner consciousness alone but the colourful world that I have traversed gives me intense delight. Life's memorableness crowds into my mind. Rural distances, clustering households, the busy river-side, fairs and festivals : these I have put into my stories. The full noon-day would possess me, laden with sights and sounds, sometimes it would darken with clouds—they have passed into my songs. And I have been engaged in national work, planning for social and educational reform : what a lot I have written. Then came the call to Santiniketan corner : a few trees and children : a bare festival in which people from many lands joined to discover each other.

"Through all this I have sought the fulfilment of my vision—what will remain of it ?

"Perhaps something will remain in my writings, but in this world the decree of imperishability does not last. Now I feel tired even to think. The time for writing is gone. I see pictures in my mind. I cannot tell you what a world of sight I have entered."

The Santiniketan sky is ablaze with *Chaitra*[1], bare horizon's mirage encircles patches of green and a few house-tops which is the *Ashram*. What Rabindranath said goes well with the skyful

1 March-April, last month of the Bengali year.

sight of this Year's End. And the significance of this atmospheric vision lies in some reference to the green heart of things, which grows.

II

Planted in the gravel, the *panchabati*—five trees placed there by the poet himself—continue to flourish ; defeating the dry soil this tree-shaded abode of learning beckons to us.

In this very grey world of to-day the powerful sight which has raised the Visva-Bharati would not be so easily understood.

Under the dust lies the soil which the roots must reach. There we shall find shelter for culture and education which is universal ; from hidden depths of continuity new sight comes up again and again to the lighted air. Our symbolic leaves and shoots live in union with soil and sun ; spreading out in a diversity of foliage. Studying this small poem of the Earth, Santiniketan, I have thought of this mystery of dual vision. We might hold on to it while the dust-storm rages.

As a frequent visitor, I have realised that here the terms of life's reference are on the increase. I have not tried to collect much evidence : perhaps a tree has been framed, where its trunk reaches the ground—near it somebody has drawn an *alpona* of conch-shell and the *chakra* ; a Chinese scholar is poring over the *Tripiṭaka* ; there is the new tennis court for girls ; in the Tea-Circle sitting on mats or wicker *morahs* different nationals are eagerly conversing. Near the Co-operative Stores the new laboratory building flaunts its foundation. A cartful of red gravel has been dumped in front of "Shyamali" cottage, it goes well with the fiery blossoms of that thorny-limbed *shimul* tree. The *Sonajhury* branches have suddenly become wild yellow ; *neem* blossoms, lemon blossoms, *madhavi* and *keya* circulate with the seasons. It moves, it changes. In the Vidya-Bhavana researchers sit busy with the palm-leaf manuscripts ; in the departments of Art proceed song, dance, and pictures. About a mile further away are rural industries, farming, *charkha*—another branch of work. But the

roots and branches meet in a complete ideal of *Ashram* life for which you must seek within the sight of a great poet.

To me the perennial factor is the coming together of things —how did this happen in a lonely meadow? The advent of scholars and artists, spring and rain festivals, electric light in mud huts, literary evenings arranged by children from different provinces—many streams have met within a small enclosure.

That this current will be dried up I find it hard to visualise even when I look far afield. Whither India? Will not this green centre of Bengal be kept open for hospitality? Are we not also regionally conscious these days when India's cultural unity has to be strengthened?

In any case, what has been attained cannot be disproved. This unique flowering of civilisation will live as part of human experience.

This is not to say that perfection has been reached; indeed it is the sense of something unfinished which rests one's eyes in Santiniketan. No brick and mortar paradise affords you bare admittance here, official finality carrying out its behest with complacent robots. Space remains for us to be developed not with cement but with human experience. Why should I not come here to read a book under the trees, and luck providing, even invest in a cottage, a palm-fringed production, down *Tal-tori* way? Here the skies are full of songs, Rabindranath's songs. If we could speak well of this place to a dozen people, that would be a contribution. Creative processes are helped in devious ways.

III

Rabindranath's sight, as disclosed in a public enterprise—this has been my theme. The gift of a new outlook, eternalised in literary and artistic expression cannot be adequately discussed here.

That evening, Rabindranath ended by saying:

"I do not worry any more as to what will remain or not. The *Upaniṣad* has said—'Remember your deed'—and this has surely been said about our inner mind."

From our view-point, Rabindranath's artistic manifestation, even if it be the outer evidence, carries the seal of immortality. In his poems there sweeps the breath of a vanished age, signet of Earth's wonder, and there is a store of fruits and flowers for many coming years. Creations which hold so much of life's music and rhythm must depend upon the existence of Nature itself. In history we have seen the indestructibility of words, of words uttered by the great. Generals have perished shouting in the netherworld of ancient Italy—even to-day death's carousal holds in new domains of suicidal might—but Dante's Beatrice shines in an aureole of words, at the door of heaven. When our police, priestcraft and zemindar will have vanished with the dust of modernity, Bengal's inmost heart untouched by lurid transience, will not die. People on the banks of the Padma will even then hear the voice of their poet, who is writing poems now in evening light. The wide landscape will bear witness to life's miracle once uttered in Rabindranath's language.

IV

What realism is I do not know, but truth's courage, I am sure, is to be identified with Rabindranath's writings as with his other activities.

To-day in his New Year's Address, he looks at man and confesses his amazement at "the cruel demoralised state of humanity which claims to be civilised" ; this demoralisation he finds expressed in "a vast contemptuous indifference towards crores of men". Unashamed greed, which must one day loosen its alien grip on India, ushers in prospects of chaotic disruption ; rote-repeating and ritual will not save us either from the consequence. "India's . . . agonising poverty . . . exceeding want of food, cloth-

ing, water, education, health and whatever is essential for man's mind and body. . . his existence. . . ."—can evasion save our humanity from facts such as these ?

Man's suffering, in a seer's vision, has not been banished as unreal, actuality is realised as part of truth. The challenge lies in man's spiritual consciousness, liberating action befitting our humanity. Ponderous spirituality propitiating evil by gifts in order to safeguard bliss for select people—this would be unthinkable in Rabindranath. His vision is fearless because it is based on love and can never agree to extension of wrongs, however augustly patronised, or to irresponsible citizenship in private worlds. Wishful sanctuary in India's past again, he knows, will not create the future.

Even in his earliest publication, sixty-three years ago, Rabindranath's clarity of sight finds expression. *Kavi-Kāhini* (A Poet's Story) was published in 1878. Here are translated extracts :

> What you have seen, and what you watch to-day,
> Have not these, O mountain, made you shiver ?
> Agonised unrest in the world of man,
> Bloodshed, tyranny, evil's turbulence ?
>
> Crores of men, in dark dungeons,
> Crushed in bondage, imprisoned,
> Fill heaven's ears with piteous cry.
>
> And at last their spirits flag, bereft of fire,
> Chains of calumny are ornaments
> Clasped on our necks, in supine acceptance.

Into youth's garden an artist walks as it were by right, but those who think that Rabindranath was ever induced to ignore life's harsher aspects, are wrong even if they may be "realists".

> Multitudes, their peace and freedom
> Trampled under power's sanguinary tread.
> And yet tyrants would claim to be men,
> Would boast of being civilised !

Extraordinary similarity is here to be observed between sixteen and eighty—nor has there been much change in the conditions described above.

Rabindranath can utter this because he has the courage to accept Europe's great humanity even while condemning its political civilisation. Even as a boy he strove to express, in halting words, an ideal of world humanity which later took shape in Visva-Bharati. Not through reprisal but through realisation of true relationship, and humane action has he welcomed a new era of understanding. His eyes have been fixed on a wide arena of human fellowship.

> No one a master, none a slave—
>
> (*Kavi-Kāhini*)

From his early days he sought for reality in a deep communion with nature but he also sought fulfilment in human nature—"the great heart of man" as he calls it in *Kavi-Kābini*. There, he sings,

> I had once heard from a wandering saint
> 'Man's heart must find another one'. . . .

In his dual aspiration—union with man and with his universe—lies the secret of a poet's life. And also the springs of his worldly activities. Perhaps we shall reach near to his present "world of sight" if we can understand better the nature of his faith which has given him vision.

THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By Radhakamal Mukherjee

THE world has not given birth to many world poets whose imaginative creations live and inspire people through the ages. Among world poets there are yet fewer who have been men of wisdom and action which have their messages for all times to come.

There are hardly any pressing problems in the life of India and of humanity of which Rabindranath Tagore has not given definite and far-seeing solutions. And as the world comes back from the use of force, lust and hatred and confusion of values to the seat of reason, it will find again and again joy and hope in his social philosophy, in his cultural and educational experiments and in his institutions at Santiniketan.

To modern political India distracted by the conflicts of communities, castes and religions he interprets the history of Indian civilisation as one in which mankind is seeking to attempt a definite synthesis. For Indian culture is a synoptic whole in which the Aryans and the non-Aryans, the ancient Greeks and the Persians, Muhammedans of West and those of Central Asia and the English from Great Britain have contributed to the process of creation. We neither have the right nor the power, he warns us, to exclude any one people from building up the future destiny of India. To an urban-industrial India neglecting the village and the villager his message is that of self-sufficiency in the hamlets and co-operation of the villagers for the purposes of agricultural reconstruction, education, improvement of communications and water supply and the provision of all cultural amenities for the rural folks. The conception of a peasant democracy growing out of the union of self-conscious and

independent rural communes has permanent lessons for an agricultural country like ours in which parliamentarism is likely to develop itself into a class rule, the supremacy of the new rich and middle classes.

One who has seen at work his rural education and reconstruction programme at Sriniketan cannot but appreciate the nobility, certitude and comprehensiveness of his political vision, in which agricultural co-operation and education, folk art, festival and pageant recreate themselves along with a free creative and self-governing peasantry that does not surrender itself to either bureaucratic inspection or socialistic regimentation.

Rabindranath Tagore has been one of the founders of the national education movement which not only stands for vernacularisation and the eschewing of "exam and cram"—who can ever forget his just and admirable satire of the *Parrot's Training ?*—but also for the renovation of India's rich cultural heritage in the minds and hearts of her youth through educational experimentation. And yet he has been also the life and soul of Visva-Bharati, intended as a centre of learning for the understanding and *rapprochement* of the world's major cultures. And this institution, as the Poet envisaged it, would also be the centre of the economic life of India, using science for agriculture so as to feed itself and its alumni, and grouping round it all the neighbouring villages and vitally uniting them with itself in all its economic efforts and experiences. A University which teaches and co-ordinates the cultural products and experiences of humanity, and yet one which lives by its own labour through both the minds and muscles of its students can alone give the training and the discipline for building up the future social and economic order.

The Poet's distant journeys to different countries in Europe from 'Great Britain to Russia and Turkey and in the New World in Canada, the United States and Peru as well as in Japan, China and the Dutch East Indies have contributed not a little in forging new channels of cultural intercourse, and in reviving the ancient ideological bonds of India with the Far Eastern countries.

At the close of the nineteenth century, just before the outbreak of the South African war and again in 1926 when he went to Europe, Tagore wrote with almost prophetic vision about "the blood-red clouds of the West and whirlwind of hatred" driving the peoples to "a clash of steel".

The world-teacher found out that the greatest problem for humanity is not the conflict between the East and the West which preoccupies Asiatic thinkers but the conflict between man and the machine, between personality and organisation. Whether in the East or in the West, it is huge and hungry organisations which are expanding beyond limit ; these overwhelm the individual man, and eat up the life-stuff of humanity. Tagore remains, like the ancient seers of India, a confirmed believer in the Person of Persons. "I believe in life," says he, "only when it is progressive ; and in progress, only when it is in harmony with life. I preach the freedom of man from the servitude of the fetish of hugeness, the non-human. I refuse to be styled an enemy of enlightenment, because I do stand on the side of Jack the human, who defies the big, the gross, and wins victory at the end."

This uncompromising affirmation of the majesty, the dignity and the glory of the individual and the human is in Rabindranath's case not a matter of philosophy but of a profound mystical experience. That experience of the concreteness or the humanity of God and of the divinity of Man the Eternal, the Person of Persons, has again and again expressed itself freely and exuberantly in a thousand and one poems and songs of his.

The twentieth century has been the era of false gods and false fetishes—the pugnacious gods of individual nations and the inexorable fetishes of efficiency which regiment human bodies and human souls in the insatiable pursuit of power. This has led to war, to re-barbarisation and abnegation of humanity's cherished liberties on a scale unparalleled in its history. It is a mystical re-assertion of the glory of Man-god or God-man, which alone can save the world from the cult of power and its inevitable

nemesis of conflict between man and man, between class and class, between nation and nation. Neither the economic internationalism of a new League of Nations nor the revival of the traditions of the French Revolution and British Liberalism, neither the socialistic dream of the unity of the proletariat of all nations nor a new appeal to a sense-born humanism and art can muster the influence necessary today for world peace. And as long as world peace is not established in this century or the next, Rabindranath Tagore's vision of the spiritual kinship of man which is universal will have an ever-increasing significance. The world teacher has said : "So long men had been cultivating, almost with religious fervour, that mentality which is the product of racial isolation ; poets proclaimed, in a loud pitch of bragging, the exploits of their popular fighters ; money-makers felt neither pity nor shame in the unscrupulous dexterity of their pocket-picking, diplomats scattered lies in order to reap concessions from the devastated future of their own victims. Suddenly the walls that separated the different races are seen to have given way, and we find ourselves face to face. And thus to all men : The God of humanity has arrived at the gates of the ruined temple of the tribe. Though he has not yet found his altar, I ask the men of simple faith, wherever they may be in the world, to bring their offering of sacrifice to him. I ask them to claim the right of manhood to be friends of men. I ask once again, let us, the dreamers of the East and the West, keep our faith firm in the Life that creates and not in the Machine that constructs."

It is not only the wisdom of India that speaks thus through her social philosopher, but also the garnered experience of humanity of both the East and the West. The economic revolution in the era of big business, large cities and disease-ridden slums of nineteenth-century Europe has now made a tour round the world, and this underlies the tremendous and ever-sharpening conflicts not only between class and class, and nation and nation, but also between the individual, the custodian and focus of the ultimate values, and the organisation which has everywhere obs-

cured and obliterated the latter through the worship of efficiency and power. If civilisation is to be saved from the new outbreak of savagery within its gates, it needs a social philosophy like that of Rabindranath Tagore which grounds itself on religion and can thus move the hearts of the multitude. For social planning, even on a world basis, by economists, statesmen and financiers, cannot usher in the new order unless humanity changes its present life-organisation, its hierarchy of values, and that re-orientation can come only from a living religion. It is only the Religion of Man such as India's and Tagore's that can furnish the adequate social philosophy and impel the planning of the future order.



THE POETRY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By Buddhadeva Bose

RABINDRANATH TAGORE is a phenomenon. The quality, the quantity, the infinite variety of his writings have made him one of the world's greatest literary artists and, taking all things together, perhaps the greatest since Shakespeare. If in the West he is not generally mentioned with Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe, that is simply because he writes in a language with which few Europeans are familiar.

The West has honoured him like a king ; he has won the Nobel Prize and the admiration of eminent literary personalities, yet it would be useful to remember that those who read him in any language but his own know very little of him indeed. The West knows him as a mystic, a magnificent-looking Hindu seer, the incarnation of India's message to the world, and this too is true that India never sent out to the world a better representative of her culture. But to his countrymen he is the beloved poet, the maker and singer of songs, and this is the role he himself prefers to all others, as many of his poems, plays and essays testify. For who would be seer or saint or prophet when one can be a poet ! We who speak his language can never think of him as an exalted dignitary or as a man transcendentally holy ; we feel that he is ours, of us and with us, pouring forth in an incessant cascade of song the very breath of our beings. To see him is perhaps to be inspired with awe, nor can one look upon his godlike face and form and hear his rich, musical voice without immediately placing him on a cold, glittering height of adoration. But this feeling is dispelled on reading his works. There rivers shimmer and green plains darken under a passing cloud ; there are the unending cycle of seasons and the everlasting procession of human beings : the heart of Bengal opens out and we discover ourselves.

This is why Tagore's fame as a mystic has never gained ground in his own country, outside strictly academic circles. To be frank, *we* do not love *Gitānjali* for its mystical qualities but for its superb poetry. It is not

> I dive down into the depth of the ocean of forms, hoping to gain the perfect pearl of the formless—

or

> Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life—

but

> Clouds heap upon clouds and it darkens. Ah, love, why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone—

or

> In the deep shadows of the rainy July, with secret steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers—

that really goes deep down into our beings and thrills us to the marrow. These poems, simple, delicate and flower-like in form, have a rock-like core that will preserve the Tagorean aroma for centuries. It is on such pieces that Tagore's greatness—or should we say uniqueness—as a poet ultimately rests.

Poetry endures longer than prose, and lyric poetry has greater hold on the individual mind than either epic or dramatic verse, both of which aim at collective audiences. Happily, therefore, Tagore is greater in his poetry than in his prose, and greater in his songs than in his poetry. We all know how wonderfully versatile he is ; we are fully aware that it is chiefly to him that we owe the richness of modern Bengali prose, nor can we ever stray far from his fiction and dramas, essays and *belles-lettres*. Yet when it comes to any sort of an evaluation, we find that of all the princely gifts he has rained on his undeserving countrymen the princeliest of all is, without doubt, his poetry. I further wish to suggest that it is in his short, lyrical pieces (most of which were originally composed as songs or set to tune later on) that his highest poetic powers have been revealed.

In his own country, Tagore has attained the peak point in every conceivable sphere of writing, but it would be unfair to place him only against the background of Bengali literature. In order to do full justice to him, we must compare him to the greatest writers of the world. And what result does this comparison bring ? Clearly, he has rivals, formidable rivals in the sphere of fiction or drama, essay or criticism, humour or phantasy. Think of dramatic or narrative poetry, other names rise to the lips. Talk of poetry in the grand manner : even *Balākā* has its peers in world's literature. But of the pure lyric form he is an unapproachable master. We have yet to know of any other poet who has to his credit such poignantly beautiful lyric poems, and in such profusion. We think of Shakespeare's songs and sonnets, of the fragments of Sappho ; of Villon and Pushkin, Shelley and Heine ; excellence we find in all, profusion in some, but this reckless abundance, this scattering of all the world's riches on the wayside for any casual traveller to come along and pick up—this, I think, is unique to Tagore. His lyrics are as beautiful as they are numerous ; their profusion is amazing, and the perfection of each little poem even more so. Here, indeed, is God's plenty. Tagore has his rivals in every other sphere, in song he is supreme. He has been able to sustain the lyric fervour through over sixty years of terrific activity, which included doing things only remotely connected with literature. He began to storm us with songs when he was sixteen, and at eighty he has not quite finished. We all grow older with every year, while every year that passes, as Shaw once said of Ellen Terry, makes him younger. When he was about forty (a dangerous age), he wrote the lovely poems of *Kshanika*, between sixty and seventy (roughly speaking) he reaped the most magnificent harvest of songs since the *Gitāñjali-Gitimālya-Gitāli* cycle ; the splendour of *Puravi* and the tenderness of *Mahuyā* were both achieved between sixty and seventy ; and in the last ten years he has devised new modes of lyric expression in prose-poems and verses. Even in his very latest books of poems there

is a shade of feeling, a tone of thought he had not exploited before.

Comparing him to the world's greatest writers, we may set forth our results in two bold and clear statements : first, that Tagore is incomparable in his combination of many precious gifts, for he is at once poet and philosopher, lyrist and humorist, novelist, short-storyist and scholar, singer and musical composer, playwright and actor, essayist, satirist and pamphleteer, critic and patriot, religious and political leader, educationist, child's poet, writer of text books and finally—a painter. Secondly, Tagore is definitely the world's greatest lyric genius.

II

Lyric poetry is "pure" poetry. It tells no story, conveys no noble idea, imparts no instruction, creates no character or situation; it does its work simply by inducing a psychological mood in the reader. The mood itself is intangible ; it is like a vague feeling of uneasiness, a slight, undefinable illness of the body or like the sudden sting of memory. That is why lyric poetry has to depend for its effect almost entirely on sound. Communication is *direct*, that is, it is not achieved through the help of *meaning*. In other words, the medium and meaning become one and the same, as in music. Words which are intended to be the means of expression themselves become the expressed ; to read them—or hear them—is to go through a complete experience ; there is nothing more to say, and there is nothing to explain. This symptom is discernible in varying degrees in all lyric poetry, and most completely in Tagore's shorter lyrics and songs. Because they obtain their effect mainly or wholly through sound, through the pattern of words, it is extremely difficult to explain *why* one is so deeply moved by them, especially when one is writing in an alien language. Writing about Tagore in English is nearly as difficult as translating him into English, and this, I think, supports

my contention that Tagore's genius is pre-eminently and intensely lyrical.

I have always admired the English *Gitānjali* as a miracle of translation, but on the whole, Tagore in English is only a shadow of his real self. While on the subject of translation of poetry, one of the editors of the *Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation* very nearly contradicts theory and practice and implies that poetry *is* untranslatable. "What foreigner could understand," he says, "why six simple words of Milton—

> Nymphs and shepherds dance no more

'can draw tears', as A. E. Housman attested, 'to the eyes of more readers than one' ? What is there in—

> Brightness falls from the air,
> Queens have died young and fair,
> Dust hath closed Helen's eye.

—why did these lines convey to C. E. Montague's mind 'a state of poignant exultation' ? Unless a man is truly bilingual (and such men are rare) all these effects must escape him."

It follows that the subtler effects of poetry—and lyric poetry in particular—must be confined to those born to the poet's language. There are many in India today who are very much familiar with the English language and English poetry, yet many of them will perhaps confess that lines of verse very highly rated by English writers have sometimes made very little impression on them. This, in one sense, is the weakness of poetry and, in another, its strength. It makes poetry local, regional or national, whichever term you prefer ; at the same time, it gives poetry an imperishable quality. Primitive word-magic, witches' abracadabra, mystical, meaningless and omnipotent chantings of priests, dance-rhythm of nursery rhymes—all survive in poetry. Meanings change and intermingle, philosophies fade, ideas grow banal, and the word endures. Many of the most typical poems of Tagore are simply magical. I feel it anew every time I open one of his books of songs. Personally, I cannot read more than

three or four of his songs in succession : there is a catch at the throat, and I have to close the book and seek relief in some trivial occupation. Who can explain why a single simple sentence (or part of a sentence) like

এমনি ক'রে শ্রাবণ-রজনীতে
হঠাৎ খুশি ঘনিয়ে আসে চিতে

or

রৌদ্র-মাখানো অলস বেলায়

or

যেতে-যেতে পথে পূর্ণিমা রাতে চাঁদ উঠেছিল গগনে

strikes at the heart like a pang, "drawing tears", as Housman would have said, "to more readers than one"? What foreigner can understand the "state of poignant exultation" such lines convey ?

III

I have chosen the quotations carefully (and there are hundreds of lines like these), confining my attention to those passages which seem to me perfect specimens of "pure" poetry. There are those who prefer grandeur of thought, as in

হার-মানা হার পরাবো তোমার গলে

or

আমি বহু বাসনায় প্রাণপণে চাই
বঞ্চিত ক'রে বাঁচালে মোরে—

and there are those who prefer the marvel of metaphor, as in

কখন বাদল-ছোঁয়া লেগে
মাঠে-মাঠে ঢাকে মাটি
সবুজ মেঘে-মেঘে

or

প্রথম আলোর চরণধ্বনি উঠলো বেজে যেই
নীড়বিবাগী হৃদয় আমার উধাও হলো সেই—

and the loyalty of the general readers of Bengal is divided between the story poems, the political poems and those poems where rhymes and alliteration take one's breath away. There is a depth of thought in Tagore's poetry which takes a whole life's time to fathom, his narrative and dramatic poems are superb and, of course, he is a master of metaphor. He has invented new metrical principles and stabilised the old ones, he has exploited every technical device possible to the Bengali language ; his genius glows in his use of rhyme, alliteration, assonance and even onomatopoeia. All this is true ; he has poems to suit every taste, every passing mood, and it is not at all surprising that different persons admire his poetry for different reasons. My concern here is particularly to point out those poems where the interest of story or idea and the dazzle of metaphor or rhyme-alliteration scheme are equally absent, poems which are utterly bare and magnificently simple. I have given only a few instances, but every reader will be able to supply himself with many others. In a sense, such poems contain the quintessence of poetry ; at any rate, they bring us the finest distillation of the Tagorean spirit.

There is another angle, however, from which Tagore's poetry should be viewed, unless we are content with forming a quite inadequate notion of it. It is true that his most characteristic role is that of a lyric poet, yet he is different from other lyric poets in his immense range and variety. Shelley, for instance, plays on a single chord ; he is a lyrist even in the derivative sense of the word, for, by his own admission, he made himself the lyre of the tumultuous west wind. Like the music of Pan, his song is sweet, sweet and piercing sweet, but the burden of the song is always the same. This is generally the case with all lyric poets, highly self-centred as they are. Tagore, however, is an exception. He is a poet of infinite variety, his range is Shakespearean. His voice is not the voice of a lyre, nor that of Pan's reed ; his voice is rather a full-throated orchestra where several instruments play in harmony. Consider singly each of his books of poems, and you will find that each book is different from its predecessor,—

different in technique as well as in tone. Tagore has invented and perfected many fine instruments of expression any one of which would have built the reputation of a poet, and we may add that quite considerable poets might have fallen in love with any one of them and descended to the level of self-imitation. From this weakness even literary masters are not always free. Once a mode or a manner succeeds, the temptation to go on repeating it is sometimes too strong even for great minds. For instance, that once-terrifying iconoclast, Bernard Shaw, finally succumbed to his own idol. Tagore has never repeated or imitated himself, he has been constantly changing, constantly growing right up to the age of eighty. From his boyhood he has been a ceaseless experimentor in poetry, though, for some mysterious reason, his prose changed very slowly till *Sabuipatra* impelled him to create the new Bengali prose. It seems that as soon as he had published one group of poems he got tired of that mode and started evolving a new one. With the publication of every book we can almost hear him say—"Thank God I have done with *that*. Now for something new !" However enchanting a particular mode may be, he does not wish to linger, for he is always outgrowing himself. First we have the lovely, delicate and sensuous poems of his first youth, then brooding, self-conscious *Mānasi*, followed immediately by *Sonār Tari* and *Chitrā*, where a marriage was arranged between the world of human beings and that of Nature. The brooding deepens in *Kalpanā* and crystallises in *Naivedya* and *Kheyā*, while *Kshanikā* goes off in a tangent to a delicious, delirious realm where laughter is wedded to love and gaiety to tenderness. No English poet could have written *Kshanikā*, and the only European poet who could have conceived of such a work is Heine. This extremely rare combination of humour and the lyric spirit is no less remarkable in *Shishu* which contains definitely the finest cycle of child poems in world's literature. *Balākā* is tremendous, yet what can be more surprising and more characteristic of Tagore than that it should be followed by the racy, homely and colloquial *Palā-*

takā. After *Palātakā* came the technical revolution of *Lipikā*, which I always think of as a book of poems—and what else is it? Of the little things in it like *Barshār Dine* or *Suorānir Sādh* I can say that I tremble with an agonised delight even to think of them. To *Puravi* and *Mahuyā* I have already referred, and *Parishesh* and *Punashcha* open yet another new phase in Tagore's poetry. He is still experimenting, still intensely interested in the craft of verse, and to this day outdoing his juniors in technical innovations. Intersperse between these the minor works like *Chaitāli* and *Kanikā*, the narrative and dramatic poems, the humorous verses and countless songs which represent every change in mood and manner—and you will have some idea of the variety of Tagore's poetry. Through all these phases there has been a corresponding change and evolution in technique—it could not but be so—but I have not the space to discuss it here. It would be enough to say that he never got stuck anywhere, his most glorious achievement could not fascinate him. However brilliant the phase, he left it behind without a sigh, never doubting that the next turn in the road would bring something still more wonderful. What he said about Shajahan may more aptly be said about himself: he is greater than his deeds.

তোমার কীর্তির চেয়ে তুমি যে মহৎ,
তাই তব জীবনের রথ
পশ্চাতে ফেলিয়া যায় কীর্তিরে তোমার
বারংবার।

And his soul's cry has always been—

হেথা নয়, হেথা নয়, অন্য কোথা, অন্য কোনখানে।

IV

Through his prose writings Tagore has taught us self-respect and national consciousness; he has exhorted us to know ourselves, to develop and depend on our own strength, to rise against tyranny and oppression, to laugh at demagogues, to love

humanity and to be interested in the world. He is the Great Master at whose feet two generations have already sat and learned and there is no doubt that many other generations will follow suit. This is great work, but he has done something greater through his poetry. His poetry has initiated us into the mysteries of life itself. Lines of his verse are imbedded in our subconscious minds ; we live and move about in the aura of his poetry and are not aware of it just as we are not aware of the atmosphere surrounding us. Sometimes those lines float up to the surface, whole poems beat upon us as memory would storm one lying awake at night—and we grow still in the midst of an animated conversation or suddenly stop in the street while running to catch the office bus. His poetry has taught us to live, to love and to suffer. His prose introduces us to life, but his poetry teaches what to do with it.



RABINDRANATH—THE DRAMATIST

By P. Guha-Thakurta

> "*Vālmiki Pratibha* is not a composition which will bear being read. Its significance is lost if it's not heard sung. . . ."
>
> *My Reminiscences.*

> "In *Māyār Khela*, the songs were important, not drama. . . . The play of feeling, and not action was its special feature."
>
> *My Reminiscences.*

> "What a poet writes is not intended to have any meaning. . . . what's written is to be accepted just as it is. . . . I've told you this is all like a tune on a flute—not something which is to be understood, but just a sound.
>
> The Poet in *Phālguni.*

> "We don't need any scenery. The only background we need is background of the mind—on it we are going to paint a picture by passing the brush of music over it."
>
> The Poet in *Phālguni.*

THE four passages above are selected quite deliberately to suggest not only how Rabindranath himself looks at his dramatic work, but also what he thinks it should be. It is clear that his outlook and theory do not exactly fit in with the accepted ideas on drama, nor do they fulfil any of the conditions required by modern stagecraft, but that is only to be expected. For, it is the musical appeal of drama which has impressed Rabindranath more than action, idea more than story ; and he has gone on developing its lyrical possibilities almost to the exclusion of everything else—unbrokenly from the time he wrote *Vālmiki Pratibha* (The Genius of Valmiki) right up to his *Rakta Karavi* (Red Oleanders) and *Mukta Dhārā* (The Stream Set Free). Indeed, his earlier attempts at playwriting are the most significant of his whole career as a dramatist, because they point out clearly the

direction in which he was to experiment with the dramatic dialogue as in *Prakritir Pratisodh* (Nature's Revenge) and *Raja O Rani* (The King and the Queen) and *Chitra* and also to evolve the symbolical type of play as in *Dākghar* (Post Office) and *Phālguni* (The Cycle of Spring).

Here it is essential that we grasp the main strands of Rabindranath's dramatic mind which, it is only fair to say, does not admit of Pirandello's definition of drama, namely, "drama is action, sir, action, not confounded philosophy". It only exhibits in the main the principle which the poet himself enunciates as "the play of feeling and not action". Once this principle is recognised the development of his dramatic art presents no complexities either in its style or content. Although very few men, living or dead, have exhibited such remarkable versatility as Rabindranath, he is chiefly a "lyrist"—he has thought of many more songs than his books will ever contain. In this respect his work has developed along lines of its own, quite distinct from the main body of the modern Bengali drama. He has written and produced most of his plays independently ; he has not written plays for the public, but has rather created a public for his plays ; but it is essentially the musical qualities which distinguish his dramatic genius.

Read this : "In our house at the time," he writes of a period when he was barely twenty years old and had scribbled the play which later took shape as *Vālmiki Pratibha*, "a cascade of musical emotion was gushing forth day after day, hour after hour ; its scattered spray reflecting into our being a whole gamut of rainbow colours. Then, with the freshness of youth, our new-born energy, impelled by its virgin curiosity, struck out new paths in every direction. We felt we would try and test everything and no achievement seemed impossible. We wrote, we sang, we acted, we poured ourselves out on every side." This was the atmosphere which surrounded him when he launched himself as a playwright and which, true to his life's vocation, he has carried with him for these three score and twenty

years. This "cascade of musical emotion" is the main channel along which has flowed his entire dramatic energy and resourcefulness. Rabindranath has lyricised all dramatic action ; all his devices, jugglery of words and wonderful magic of metaphor, have that for their end. Like music, his drama is just a rhythmic ebb and flow of many tunes, all apparently hinged on the major key of an idea—a symbol of his own self-expression. That partly explains why most of his characters are as poetic as himself, staging that idea, becoming those symbols of the poet's creed of life. And so, characteristically enough, songs break forth at irregular intervals in many of his plays and stop action. The Watchman in *Phālguni* asks Chandrahas : "Is it your custom to answer questions by songs ?" Chandrahas says : "Yes, otherwise the answer becomes too unintelligible." Watchman : "Then you think your songs intelligible ?" Chandrahas : "Yes, quite, because they contain music." (He sings). . . .

So much for the musical strain. Now we turn to the philosophical strain which runs almost parallel to the poet's creative consciousness—his concept of life. In *My Reminiscences* Rabindranath has devoted a whole chapter to the explanation of the meaning of the play *Prakritir Pratisodh*, which according to him "may be looked upon as an introduction to the whole of my literary work ; or rather this has been the subject on which all my writings have dwelt—the joy of attaining the infinite within the finite." This play was written towards the end of the period when he was slowly emerging as a poet with a message and his doctrine—"Jivan Devata" or Life's Spirit—the immanence of a universal power in the created universe—came into full expression in his first batch of symbolical plays, namely, *Saradotsav* (Autumn Festival), *Achalāyatan* (The Immovable Sanctuary) and *Dākghar*. It is difficult to judge any of these plays by the ordinary concepts of drama, for they are conceived aesthetically and expected to be understood aesthetically. They are not dramas of circumstance ; it is the



permeating idea in them that matters, as in European plays of this type—Hauptmann's *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*, Strindberg's *Dream Play*, Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* and Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken.* The main characters in Tagore's plays of the symbolical type are not so much persons of flesh and blood, as personifications of the poet's subjective experience—they are, as it were, parts of the universal life-force, functioning not in the grosser world of matter, but in the world of spirit. One might almost say that they are puppets in the hands of Rabindranath through whom he expresses his own emotions, rather than real people acting and reacting in the world of sight and touch. It must be said to the great artistry of Rabindranath that the symbolic idea hardly obtrudes, in fact it does not assume sufficient definiteness to impede the free movement of the narrative ; at least in each of these three earlier symbolical plays the human interest is sustained and the climax is reached by means of simple dramatic touches.

Phālguni introduces Rabindranath's more intricate type of symbolical drama in which the play is not a mere fantasy, but it emerges as an intellectual problem through an elaborately worked allegory. In *Phālguni*, *Rakta Karavi*, and *Mukta Dhārā* the inner meaning eludes the senses : it has to be felt in the heart. In other words, it cannot be grasped by plain common sense, for it takes our minds away from all plausibility. At this stage Rabindranath emerges as a full-fledged critic of our mechanical and soulless civilization and it crystallizes in *Rakta Karavi*. The rather severe satire in the play on the tyranny of a materialistic order of society with all its ugliness and inhumanity is only relieved by Tagore's exquisitely delicate sensibility. If he has lashed materialism and worldly greed it is with a silken whip. The character of Nandini in the play stands out vividly as a symbol of love and grandeur which runs as a red thread through the tapestry of human bondage.

That is where lies Rabindranath's true universality of appeal, his success in widening our sphere of understanding and sympathy. He redeems the cruelty of civilization by that touch

of wildness, that pleasing air of irresponsible discursiveness, that flavour of the open air and the free man, for which he invents a type of literary vagabond. His Baul in *Phālguni*, his Bishu Pāgal in *Rakta Karavi*, his Thakurdada in *Saradotsav*, his Dada Thakur in *Achalāyatan*, are the varying types of such a vagabond ; they have all a gipsy strain in their blood, with an ingrained distaste for the routine of everyday life and conventionality. They are all probably parts of the poet's other self, because they all express a joy in life and a warm spirit of youth—a spirit which bubbles forth out of their hearts into songs and always songs.



RABINDRANATH'S WIT AND HUMOUR

By Pramatha Chaudhuri

HEINE, the famous lyric poet of Germany, once said that life is so desperately serious at bottom, that it would be unendurable but for the mixture of the serio-comic.

No great mind is blind to this comic aspect of life. And great writers express their sense of the comicality of things and ideas by what is known as wit and humour. Our pre-British literature shows that Bengali poets were not devoid of either. The *Chandi Kavya*, which was written in the seventeenth century, is full of humorous descriptions of priests—Hindu and Mahommedan—and of grocers, etc. In the eighteenth century we find the narrative poems of Bharatchandra sparkling with witty epigrams, some of which have become current coin in our language.

That Rabindranath, the great Indian poet, is also the wittiest writer of Bengali prose, is well-known to all who are familiar with his works. His stories and critical and polemic essays are shot through and through with startling witticisms. Wit may be described as spiritual lightning. Both have the same suddenness and swiftness, the same brilliance and immaterial piercing quality. Sparks of wit clear our mental atmosphere and reveal the disconcerting character of all that is stupid and heavy, inert or mechanical, in men and manners. I know of no other writer except Heine, who is at the same time a great lyric poet and a consummate wit.

Humour, on the other hand, betrays an attitude of amused tolerance of the comic aspect of life and things. It is more human than wit and appeals to our whole mind, both emotional and intellectual. The art of the humorist is a creative art.

The great masters of humour often create their characters. For example, Sancho Panza is not a person taken from life. He

lived only in Cervantes' mind. But is there any human being more real than Sancho Panza ? I refer to the immortal creation of literary art, to show that humorous characters come out of the mind of a great writer ; of course, they are not all compact of imagination, but are based on observation. It is this sense of humour that makes Rabindranath so human.

Rabindranath's literature is too vast for one to pick and choose humorous passages from. I may mention here only two books, one a collection of letters, *Chhinna Patra*, and the other a history of the development of his literary life,—*Jivan Smriti* (My Reminiscences). These letters abound in humorous descriptions of men and things. They have been written with so much gusto, that they can be read over and over again with unfailing enjoyment. *Jivan Smriti* was written later. In my opinion it is a perfect specimen of mature Bengali prose. Its object is to give us an insight into his poetic genius, but all the same an undercurrent of mellow humour runs through the whole book. It is absolutely free from satire, although some of the people he came across in his boyhood naturally lend themselves to caricature.

In this paper I have kept his prose writings only in view, although some of his light verse staggers us by the marvellous jugglery of words and rhymes, in which wit and humour interpenetrate.





By Rabindranath Tagore

THE DRAWINGS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By Stella Kramrisch

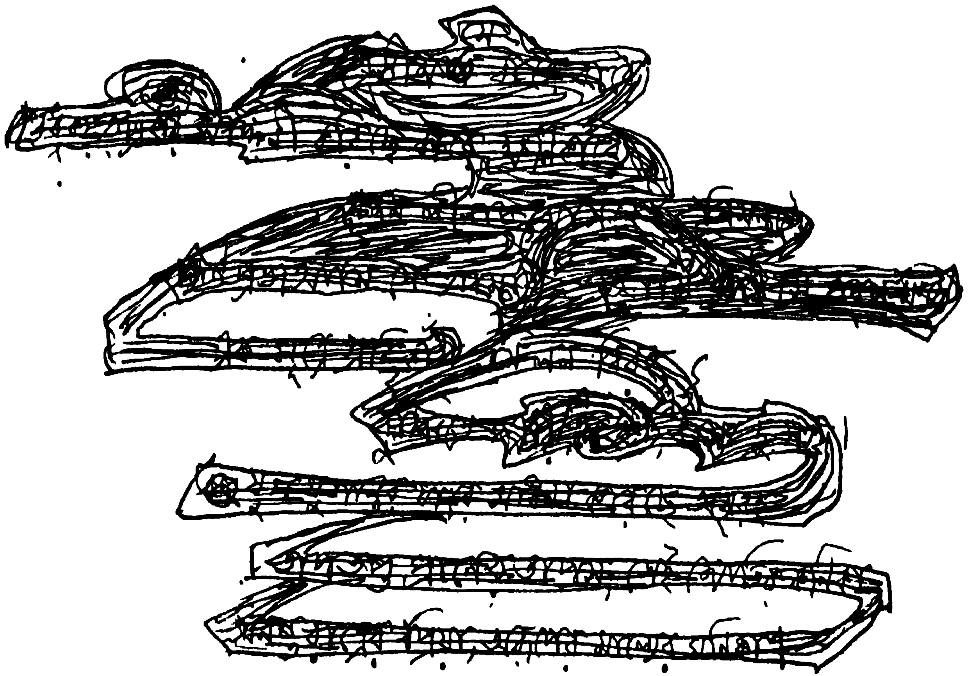
FOR the last ten years Rabindranath Tagore spent such leisure as he gave himself, in drawing and painting. For then he felt irresponsible and outside the compulsion of his literary work and its sustained quality. In such holiday hours free of responsibility he allowed himself to become an instrument and to put on record whatever prompted his hand to move along with the pen, that well-tried tool of his, in any direction it chose. When they were over, the graphic records confronted him and he accepted, with some surprise and some amusement, their orderliness. Rhythms and reminiscences, literary, formal and nameless, had assembled and, once come, had gone, yet left their trace. Benevolent permission ushered them in, and, once the performance was over, they were appraised for what they are and went to swell portfolios of vital records.

Rabindranath, at the biblical age of seventy was not a beginner in the art of enjoying holidays granted by himself and acknowledged by his own signature. It is also put on some of his early manuscripts and fits the page and its written lines. It takes any shape from a mere scroll to the web of interconnected curves which entwine the writing. His handwriting is perfect, flows with the vision that compels it, comes to a stop where it should, and obeys too, where the mind hesitates and a word is crossed out and the hand is led on by this unforeseen obstacle of a line put across, to go its own way. It comes to rest after balance has been established on the page. The process of establishing it has left its traces around the written lines, in waves and scrolls, floating shapes of clouds or birds. They are drawn with the delicacy and precision of the written letters. These early drawings

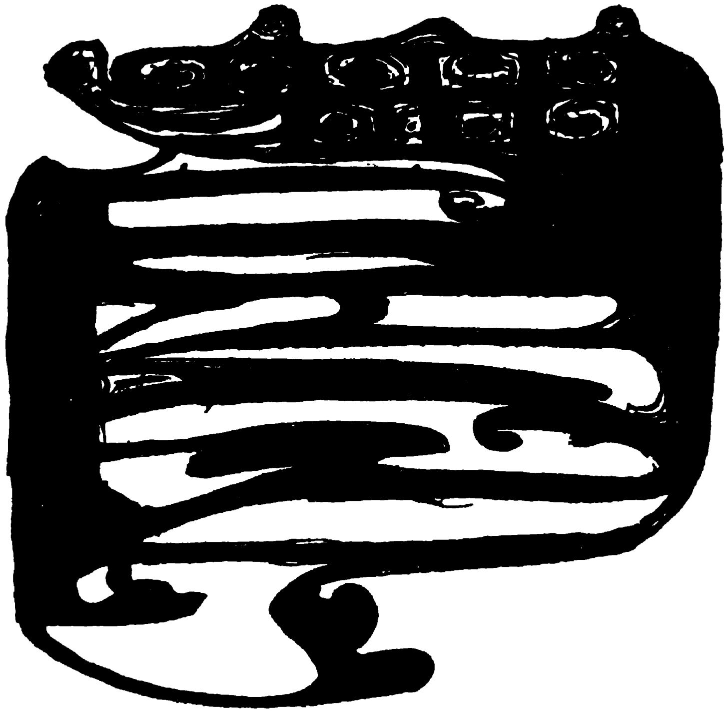
are "calligraphy" in the true sense of the word which is "beautiful writing" and they take their origin from writing.

The "graphs" had their own insistence. They detached themselves from the writing and joined their ambient lines into conclusive shapes, that of a vase, for instance, altogether full of ornament which builds it up with the stroke of the pen as the potter's wheel compels the clay. These independent islands of design are arisen from the waves of calligraphy. They stayed on. They developed in many directions and grew in size and variety of texture and contents.

The "graphs" had been produced by a hand that knew how to wield the pen. Drawn in black ink with a fine nib they are adequate to an almost ceaseless impetus. The services of the pen, as a tool, were then investigated and found applicable to uses not required while writing. Its point, but also the sides and the back, could be laid on the surface of the paper and they left their track, if not as pure, yet more varied than the insistence of the pointed nib. The continuity of its traces is now traversed by blotches or notches, sometimes cut deep into the paper with a tool that conquers new ground. The black ink is now the only one no more. Red comes in, and green, out of bottles, crude colours as they are, harsh as the cuts, scratches and piercing strokes of the pen. To this injured and newly tilled ground now cling the shapes of human faces in agony, flowers similarly alive and creatures nameless as those that had arisen on manuscript pages. None of them is finished, none a picture, each a beginning and yet not a sketch. Clamour, agony, question, the process itself of acquiring shape, are drawn and coloured in a technique itself untried hitherto. These are not works of art but visual records of the process of art. The shaping of the vision is synchronous with the testing of the tools. The process itself of art takes shape while it discloses its course. There is no disguise nor embellishment. Stark and agonised, features emerge from chaos. When they gain definition, they attain beauty, a threatened balance near to chaos.



Specimen of "erasure" photographed from one of the Poet's manuscripts



Spring hesitates at … winter's door
but the flower … rashly …
to him before her time
and meets her doom.

Specimens of "erasures" photographed from one of the Poet's manuscripts.

The distance is wide between the second phase of the pastimes of the poet and the perfection of his calligraphy. There the lines had issued from the written word and had surrounded it. They were graphs with a rectifying and ambient function, and with no independence from the script. Then, with an increasing self-assertion of the line, it preserved its calligraphic beauty in conclusive drawings. Those gave shape to the calligraphic impetus and witnessed its end in an independent and self-sufficient form.

The emancipation of the line drew with it that of the other constituents of form, surface or colour, each eager to assert itself along with the tools that produced it ; the pen was put to novel uses and the brush was tried. These excursions from the written word and the manuscript page into unknown lands were fraught with danger. Monstrous, nameless shapes reared their heads : others, more winged, grew into bird shapes, the most pregnant and adequate inmates of this heaving sea of nascent form Impressions left by types, faces and gestures, were also thrown up by it, and, once observed, repeated their appearance with increasing purpose.

Heads, flowers, landscapes, animals once named, became subjects of an unceasing productiveness. But once they have left the threshold which leads from the invisible to appearance, they claim to be made into pictures and are professedly outside the province of the Poet's leisure.

Rabindranath's many hundred leaves of leisure are drawn without effort. They are original calligraphy ; the beautiful "graphs" are those of a poet whose vision is in the words ; their rhythm is also in their lines. When, confidently, they carry on, and abandon, the place of their origin, the chasm of the beginning of things opens wide and out of it emerge the nascent shapes of things concrete. At this hour of birth, the Poet assists them to proclaim themselves dwellers on the threshold. His support has vigour, is primitive and adequate to the statement of the primeval passage from the unknown possibilities of being to actual shapes and forms.

緬懷

泰果爾先生

萬里破鴻濛西來譽望崇證成祇樹意

同我古華風獅吼禪機悟龍吟氣韻雄

詞壇尊此老福壽屬詩翁

林森



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

MY REMEMBRANCE OF POET TAGORE

ACROSS the vast expanse of seas,
You came with lofty glory from the West,
Crowned with enlightenment like Buddha.
Your ideals are similar to ours of old,
Your voice as roaring of lion awakens the human soul,
Your rhymes as humming of dragon inspire human spirit;
The literary world offers you its first place of honour :
May happiness and longevity ever belong to the Poet !

Lin Shen

Lin Shen is the President of the Republic of China.

THE NOVELS AND SHORT-STORIES OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By S. K. Banerjee

THE advent of Rabindranath in the field of fiction was very fortunately timed. The death of the great Bankim Chandra, who had nursed the novel in its infancy and raised it by his unaided efforts to vigorous manhood, had left a void which urgently cried out to be filled up. He had indeed left a very rich legacy but also a great uncertainty about its future expansion. The historical novel showed signs of exhaustion and but little promise of replenishment. The social novel had indeed a promising future before it, but a radical change of method could alone tap its latent resources. The problem before the Bengali novel, so suddenly arrested in its victorious career, was the discovery of the new method that would enable it to advance to further heights.

The seeds of a new growth came from an unexpected quarter. They were dropped from the wings of a poet who had just cleared the misty mid-heights of a morbid youthful fancy. It is very curious that this young poet should, like Wordsworth's Sky-lark, prove himself "true to the kindred points of heaven and home" and reconcile poetic flights with the sober pedestrianism required of a novelist. Indeed the twin impulses in him seemed to proceed from a kindred source, poetic imagination sharpening and reinforcing the faculty of realistic observation. A new realism interpenetrated by poetic vision thus came into play to shape the further course of the novel.

Before, however, the new instrument was forged, Rabindranath made his debut by treading the traditional ways. His earliest experiments in the field—*Bou Thākurānir Hāt* (1884) and *Rājarshi* (1886-87)—betray a haziness of atmosphere and characterisation. They are dug out of the same quarry as his *Sandhyā-Sangīt* and *Prabhāt Sangīt*. It seems as if the vague, dark, morbid fancies of

the poems had been incarnated as creatures of flesh and blood in the novels. Pratāpāditya is not so much a living person as a shadowy abstraction standing for the ruthless, motiveless malignity of life ever at war with love and beauty. Udayāditya, his son, is the embodiment of the frail and bloodless passivity of his earliest poetic broodings—a phantom-like figure that has walked out of the lyrical frame-work and paces the alien world of life with a strange, dreamy abstraction. *Rājarshi* attains a slightly greater distinctness both because of its historical background and of a clearer grasp of the underlying conflict. But history in the novel is thin and impalpable to the extreme, and dissolves into nothingness when the stage has to be cleared for the presentation of the inner strife. Its colourful pageant has no appeal to the author and it is swallowed up in a great solitude where the soul has leisure to give itself up to profound self-introspection. Raghupati and the King, though very elementary types, have developed a faint degree of personality, beyond any attained in *Bou Thākurānir Hāt*. The character most vividly realised is that of Basanta Roy, who is the first sketch and prototype of the wise and mellow old people of Rabindranath's dramas, subtly attuned to the joyful rhythm of life. Nakshatra Roy and a few pictures of rural folk in their superstition and featureless pliability reveal a command of psychology pregnant with future promise. The general impression left by these two early novels is that of a crude and awkward realism, incongruous and ill at ease in a prevailing atmosphere of foggy fancifulness.

II

After this brief experiment, involving a certain amount of fumbling and groping, Rabindranath soon found himself and discovered his distinctive method. His *Chokher Bāli* (1902) and *Naukā-dubi* (1906) realise, with astonishing swiftness, his latent promise as a novelist. Of these, *Chokher Bāli* for the first time illustrates the new realistic method of the

author and shows a remarkable ripeness of power. Rabindranath's realism is not the drab, dismal realism of Zola and Flaubert, an accumulation of sordid details to create a full and crowded impression of a cramped, joyless atmosphere. Nor does it connote an obsession with impure, unclean passions, an insistence on the unpurged urge of sex-impulse as the key-fact of the mystery of human life. His realism consists indeed in a close, detailed study of life, the slow changes of feeling and attitude working themselves out from day to day in place of the swift intuitions and divinations of Bankim Chandra. But it does not convey the impression of low, grey skies shut in by dark horizons, where we can hardly breathe with any freedom and where the exhilarating impulses of life are chilled and frozen. It also shows a more daring disregard of moral conventions, a courageous handling of forbidden themes like illicit passions. He thus widens the scope of the novel beyond the limits fixed by Bankim Chandra. The treatment is, however, not coldly analytical and scientific, but predominantly poetic and emotional. Indeed, the distinctive feature of Rabindranath's realism lies in its close wedding with poetry and imagination, the sudden change from a diary-like transcript to the inscrutable depths of a mystic self-communion. In a later phase this realism is further enriched with a dazzling play of the intellect which coins out unforgettable epigrams and terse utterances, so that a whole harvest of realistic observation and analysis is condensed within the briefest compass. The poet in Rabindranath seldom surrenders to the realist, as even the work of detailed observation is over-arched by the spirit of beauty.

Chokher Bāli narrates a tale of tangled relations, made more knotty by intricate inter-actions among the main characters, in which love, jealousy, insensate infatuation and passive drift supply the many-coloured threads. Its social importance lies in its being a realistic portraiture of the unfulfilled yearnings of love in a young widow, Binodini. It is jealousy that first draws her to the fray, but, while the battle rages, her feelings

are transmuted into the purest kind of ideal love. She is easily the most dominating personality in the novel, and twirls all the other characters, with the exception of the strong-willed Bihāri, round her finger-tips. She has nothing of unsophisticated freshness about her but lays her plans with a consummate generalship betokening a cool, unprincipled resourcefulness. Her final surrender to a life of self-renunciation is a bit unconvincing and savours of an idealistic wind-up, but is just the thing to expect from an author who never forswears imagination even in his most realistic pre-occupations. The story reveals with a master's cunning the dark, turbid and sinister welter of passions, underneath the placid surface of a well-regulated Bengali household.

Naukā-dubi (The Wreck) is a reversion to a much simpler method in which the interest lies rather in incidents than character. It is based upon a motive of mistaken identity, which is kept up to a very late stage as an artificial means of prolonging the inner conflict. Even the slightest dose of the inquisitiveness, natural to Eve's daughters, would have cleared up the mystery about Kamala in no time and cut the central knot of the entanglement. The illusion is, however, continued at the expense of probability and we have those beautiful scenes of the river-voyage which are a very entertaining record of the uneasy struggles in Ramesh's heart. We cannot, however, afford to be too severe on a lapse which provides the very basis of the novel. Ramesh betrays a curious indecision even when he has an inkling of the truth and lets things drift wherever they may lead. The devices resorted to for reuniting Kamala with her missing husband smack too much of artifice and provide a few chapters of dull reading. It is Hemnalini who is easily the most living character of the book, and, in the sweet perfume that is the breath of her life and her firm, unwavering allegiance to her ideal, is the prototype of the later heroines of Rabindranath.

With *Gorā* (1910) we reach the culminating point of Rabindranath's achievement in the traditional novel-form. It

takes in its scope the surging tides, the full fervour and restlessness of the great Renascence movement in Bengal. The novel is thus almost epic in its range and its men and women have representative characters which almost overshadow their purely personal lives. The book throbs and pulsates with a new energy of vitality. Discussions about different religious sects, about an intense and passionate nationalism which hugs its very errors and perversions and traces them back to their original purity, about the proper channel through which patriotic aspirations ought to flow, are conducted with a superb blending of incisive logic and emotional fervour that extorts admiration. The novel yields the first indication of that dominance of the intellect which was to be still further emphasised and almost to oust emotion in the novels of the following period. Here, however, it is kept within proper limits and subordinated to the evolution of character.

A strain of criticism which is directed against the novel is that its characters are symbolical or typical and, as such, are lacking in sharp-edged, clear-cut personality. This impression of impersonality is accentuated by the polemical element in the novel which follows typical lines of conflict rather than the sharp bends and angularities of personal character. The criticism has some amount of truth in it, especially in respect of some of the secondary characters like Paresh. But the main figures have been clearly individualised, in spite of their identification with types. Gora, the hero, is, as it were, the personification of the soul of India yearning for freedom and chafing against her social and political bondage. But he has his moments of introspection when he descends into the depths of his soul to watch the birth of a strange, restless yearning not yet recognised as love. The discovery of the secret of his birth pricks the bubble of his aspirations after leadership and sends him back to his individual life where love now reigns supreme, free from the shackles of social usage. It is the friction of clashing opinions that has kindled the spark of love in Gora, Sucharita and Lalita, in whom

the sway of the gentle passion would not otherwise have been felt. The normal intercourse of life, the mild stimulus of social contacts could not have bridged the wide gulf between them, so that even the polemical element has its utility in evoking the deeper passion. The sisters have been finely differentiated with their characteristic reactions to the social environment. Binoy, with his clinging, affectionate nature, and his native shrinking from extremism of any kind, is the most normal and lovable character in the novel. Ānandamoyee, though idealised, is true enough to the traditional role of Indian motherhood and the aureole of the Madonna shines with a perfectly natural glory round her head. The secret pathos of her life, which has impelled her to walk apart from the other members of the family and hedged her round with a melancholy seclusion, constitutes the warrant of reality in her character. The common-sense, utilitarian outlook on life, as contrasted with its finer and rarer idealism, is illustrated in Mahim, who shows no hesitation in plucking at the stars to light him the way to a dusty, sordid self-advancement. Altogether, *Gora* is an impressive performance, having something of the wide range of a contemporary historical novel, in which public issues have been finely attuned to the heart-throbs of individual life.

III

After *Gora* Rabindranath's novel enters on a new phase. From now onwards, it tends to assume more and more the manner of problem novels, in which a general picture of life is replaced by a highly intellectual presentation of certain special topics. The method of leisurely evolution gives way to a rapid, breathless survey in which salient points are seized and fixed by epigrams swiftly leaping across the gaps of the story. The total impression is not of the freshness and surprise of a first narration, but of a condensed summary looked back in retrospect. Certain isolated moments are brilliantly handled without much regard for

continuity of texture. The characters are not of the common run, but dwell on the isolated summits of their special problems. Even in their cases, it is not the whole face, but a certain section of the profile that is turned to us. Nikhilesh, Sandwip, Sachish, Dāmini, Madhusudan, Amit, Lābanya, Atin, Elā are people in whom their problems exhaust the entire contents of their individual lives and on every one of whom there is the stamp of the exceptional. We do not come across them along the many-trodden paths of our common life. They are such figures as could be conjured up only by a man of genius, impersonating some of the subtlest feelings and aspirations that flit across the human heart. One of the regrettable results of this method of work is the almost complete evaporation of the sense of pathos, even where the subject naturally admitted of a pathetic treatment. Another consists in the too liberal and indiscriminate distribution of epigrams among all the characters of the novel, irrespective of any sense of dramatic fitness. The craze for sharp, trenchant utterances, reminiscent of the method of Meredith, has had thus the double effect of dissipating emotion and upsetting conformity to characterisation, and while the fire-work of intellect excites admiration, the impression that finally prevails is one of over-strain. After all, one would like to read novels "rather by steady candle-light than by a succession of dazzling electric flashes."

Side by side with this salvo of intellectual gun-fire, there is another strain—that of exquisite poetry and of the rarest imaginative flight,—in which the poetic soul of the author vents itself. Nor is this poetic strain a mere ornamental fringe, but vitally inwoven into the central scheme of the novel. The atmosphere of romance encloses almost all the love-episodes and the lives of the heroines. Kumudini in *Yogā-yoga* is compacted of the very essence of poetry, of a delicate, unearthly purity and her inner broodings are touched by the finer breath and rhythm of lyricism. The love of Amit and Lābanya is a wonderful elaboration of the rapt self-forgetfulness and wayward tenderness of love, whose



By Rabindranath Tagore

aerial flights are unrestrained by the pull of gravitation. Nowhere outside the range of lyric poetry have the subtle discontent and unattainable yearnings of this greatest of all human passions, its swift changes of mood and elusive flights of fancy been realised with a richer wealth of details and a more close-packed unity of atmosphere. Novels, as a form of art, can crave the indulgence of a looseness and elasticity of structure. As a matter of fact, rigorous unity of plot is with them rather the exception than the rule. Hence no adverse criticism lies against the novels of Rabindranath on this score. In them we are rather thankful for a new synthesis of the elements of realism, a peculiar combination between the intellect and the imagination, not paralleled in the same degree in the work of any other novelist.

Space forbids any detailed examination of the novels of this last period. *Chaturanga* (1916) the first novel of the group, is no very promising exemplification of the new method. The bewildering rapidity with which the mutual relations of Sachish and Dāmini are made to change, points rather to an errant whimsicality than to any deeper conformity to character-evolution : the irresponsibility of it all overweighs the psychology. The biography of Jagamohan, Sachish's uncle, relates more to an Idea than to a living man and savours rather of retrospect than of immediate narration. The epigram is relieved by occasional touches of poetic suggestiveness, as in the description of the indigo-factory in ruins.

Ghare-Bāire (1916 : Eng. tr. *The Home and the World*) is frankly a problem novel and its main thesis is of the nature of a laboratory experiment. It discusses the question how far wedded love, which is a monopolistic concern, can withstand the competition of the outer world. In our social arrangements the wife's choice of the husband is in reality a kind of Hobson's choice. All our romancing about life-long fidelity and devotion is but a camouflage to hide the brutal truth of an inexorable slavery. The love of the wife is worth nothing till the protective tariff-walls are broken down and it is given a chance to measure itself against

the attractions of other people. Nikhilesh has conceded this liberty to his wife, who is swept off her feet by the glamour of an extremist political leader during a period of national upheaval. But the rival is very soon discovered to be a tin-god and his feet of clay become too awkwardly prominent. Disillusionment comes in the long run, but not before a tragedy has been precipitated. The experiment, in the way in which it has been conducted, is hardly fair to the exponent of unwedded love, who is by no means a worthy rival to the husband. To that extent its value is to be discounted. The problem, however, has been handled with a penetrating intellectual power, and the moral anarchism in Sandwip has been brilliantly developed so as to create the impression of a perverted greatness. The revolutionary movement in Bengal has exerted a deep spell upon Rabindranath and he has returned to the topic in more than one of his novels. Here, more profoundly than in *Gorā*, do we feel the problem overshadowing the personal life of the characters.

In *Yogā-yoga* (1929) we have the story of an ill-assorted marriage, a sort of Indian version of a hypothetical union between Caliban and Miranda. The bestiality of the union is, however, minimised and refined to a large extent owing to the idealised grace of the marital relation which obtains in this country. Madhusudan has all the iron inexorability of an industrial magnate accustomed to impose his will on his human and mechanical tools, and grimly determined to extend it to his wedded life as well. He tries his usual methods of brutal self-assertion against his wife Kumudini, but with perplexing and unexpected reactions. The bullying, blustering tactics fall back harmless against her spiritual armour, and she shrinks more and more into herself as the storm of persecution blows louder. Madhusudan finds himself transported into realms of unwonted experience. His invincible self-confidence fails him and he staggers forward with weak, hesitating steps. Strange feelings of tenderness flit across his mind, and a curious sense of frustration mocks his self-complacency even when Kumudini yields

herself to his embraces. Finally with a strong effort he masters these weak impulses and shamelessly takes to himself a paramour as a salve to his wounded self-love. Kumudini leaves her husband's roof, only to return when the birth of a son shifts her centre of gravity and makes maternal duties overweigh conjugal rights. The conclusion is weak and hasty and leaves the main problem unsolved, besides cumbering the story with long abstract discussions about femininc rights. Madhusudan reminds us irresistibly of Soames Forsyte in Galsworthy's famous novel *The Forsyte Saga.* Thc possessive instinct is the master passion with both, in Madhusudan blatantly fierce as is natural with an upstart, in Soames mellowed through habitual exercise and all the more ineradicable on that account. Kumudini, however, treads an entirely different path from Irene, the difference in their conduct under almost similar circumstances being finely symbolical of the divergence of ideals between the East and the West.

Sesher Kavitā (1929) is a love-story pitched to the highest roman;ic key, in which realism shows itself only as a vulgar obstacle rather than as a component element. Amit, aggressively unconventional and unsmitten by the tender passion, a confirmed scoffer of love and its' morbid infatuations, meets his Nemesis in encountering Lābanya at Shillong. Since that moment his ardent impetuosity of nature, his biting sarcasm and keen intellectuality are all melted and dissolved at the great flame of love and poured forth as a fiery stream of liquid passion. Love has a similar transforming effect on Lābanya, whose shy, timid scrupulousness and icy, dumb reserve are thawed under its warm influence, until she gurgles and waxes musical like a rivulet sparkling under the bright sunshine. The initial triumphs are, however, not kept up : the very exuberance of passion leads to a recoil. The seed of frustration is there in the very heart and core of love : the tragedy of a discrepancy between "infinite longings and the finite heart that mourns" works itself out with its inevitable logic. Amit yearns for a love that will never settle

into a stagnant pool but will ripple forward in incessant movement. The picture of a stable home fades in his mind before the prospect of a gipsy vagabondage with its way-side encampments and its day-to-day impulses of love woven into the cosmic rhythm of life. Lābanya foresees the inevitable disappointment and warns him off betimes. Outside forces also intrude into the enchanted castle of love and enforce the surrender of the garrison. The feeling itself survives, but with a curious shifting of its objects. Amit, with his ideal fixed for ever on his heart, contentedly folds up his wings to settle into a conventional nest ; Lābanya, with her frozen insensitiveness melted, finds her goal in a rejected suitor who had formerly failed in evoking a response but is now recognised as offering a steadier and more reliable support. The epitaph of love is written by both, each from an individual standpoint. *Sesher Kavitā* is a novel written in a more consistent poetic strain and on a more purely poetic theme than perhaps any other novel in the world's history.

The other novels, in which the downward grade is more pronounced, may be more briefly dismissed. *Dui Bōn* and *Chār Adhyaya*, reveal more glaringly the latent dangers of the epigrammatic method without any redeeming touches. *Mālancha*, in its revival of the poetic mood, suggests hopes which are not fulfilled, as the strain of morbid jealousy is made too emphatic for the harmony of the atmosphere. The last volume, *Tīn Sangi* (1940), containing three short stories, shows unimpaired intellectual vigour and a capacity to strike off forceful character-sketches and imagine new situations, but on the whole they cannot be said to have broken fresh ground in technique and treatment. Rabindranath's solid contribution to the novel rests upon his earlier works, on *Chokher Bāli* in the first phase, *Gora* and *Ghare Bāire* in the second and *Sesher Kavitā* in the third, and furnishes very interesting proof of what poetic imagination can achieve in an alien field which requires realistic experience as its primary equipment.

IV

The short stories of Rabindranath would demand a chapter by themselves. Perhaps his is the unique example of a novelist who has attained equal eminence in both branches of his craft. In fact, his short stories reach a higher and more even standard of excellence, being entirely free from the structural looseness and inequalities of the longer novels. In richness and variety of content, in exquisitely beautiful descriptions of nature and its power of influencing the deeper emotions, in a fine synthesis between poetic vision and the penetrating psychological insight of a novelist, in the portrayal of conflicts between the individual and the wider family and social circle, and in the creation of a supernatural atmosphere within the familiar zones of our every-day life,—the short stories of Rabindranath reveal a range and height that make them out some of the best specimens of the form in the world's literature. There are at least a dozen which would indubitably take the highest rank in any representative collection of short stories and would easily bear the palm in respect of imaginative atmosphere and fine subtlety of poetic symbolism. Among love-stories *Samāpti*, *Dristidāna* and *Madhya-Vartini* are examples of the subtle and manifold workings of the passion within the narrow regulated frame-work of Bengali society. A second class deals with the piquant situations of our domestic life, where very often affection and sympathy tend to flow in unorthodox channels and create complications within the family circle. Chance relations as in *Postmaster* and *Kābuliwāllā* set in motion tender pathetic yearnings which cannot be stabilised within the social frame-work. The painful assertion of individuality against the traditional role, immutably fixed in certain families, has been finely exemplified in *Hāldār Gosthi*, and the pathetic self-deception of decayed aristocracy has been sketched in *Thākurdādā* with a tenderness of sympathy that reveals the poetic sentimental core in snobbery itself. This motive has

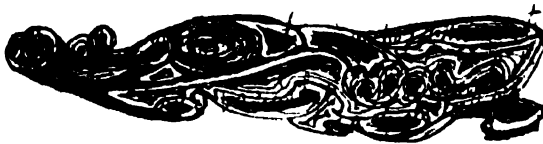
been bequeathed by Rabindranath to Sarat Chandra and worked out by the latter with a finer sense of pathos and dramatic conflict.

The spell of Nature upon human life finds wonderful treatment in *Tārāpada*, who has somehow imbibed Nature's subtle detachment, and whose native wildness of spirit is unfettered by any bonds of domesticity. His *Nishithe*, *Manihārā* and *Khudita Pāshān* are three supreme examples of his marvellous command over supernatural effects, which have been brought about by purely psychological methods without transgressing the limits of probability. A husband's penitence and the terrible shock caused by the mysterious death of a beloved wife have been the occasions of the first two, whereas the third is a dream vision, a startlingly vivid realisation of the exotic magnificence, the rich, voluptuous beauty of a vanished civilisation. And through it all runs, as a haunting refrain, a feeling of frustration, of yearnings unfulfilled, as of a lost soul straying through the wilderness of a new and strange world from which the old glamour has irrevocably departed. It may very well challenge comparison with De Quincey's *Dream-Fugue*, not perhaps commanding such a varied and sustained musical flight but excelling in a firmer grip of psychological truth and an incomparably finer sense of form.

The ultra-modern preoccupation with sex-problem and the dawn of love within the forbidden degrees of relationship has also been foreshadowed in *Nashtanirh*. The subject has, however, been treated with a fine self-restraint and command of psychology almost completely absent in the novelists of the later school, who are apt to take such a love for granted without taking the trouble to account for its genesis and growth.

The short story has a special appropriateness to Indian conditions of life, at once narrow in its range and intense in its passions. The conflict or point of interests in it hardly admits of being spread out over a full-length novel without becoming too thin-spun. This is why the short story seems to have a much

brighter future with us than the larger form. And here also Rabindranath has set a standard which it will be the despair of his successors to keep up. In the myriad-hued variety of his achievements, Rabindranath encloses a larger arc—well-nigh the complete circle—than perhaps any other literary figure in the world's history and, though his poetry will outweigh everything else that he has written, his work in the field of fiction bids fair to be a close second.



TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

IN the second month of spring, in the twenty-ninth year of the Chinese Republic, I compose this poem in the five word metre of twenty-four lines with twelve rimes, respectfully to congratulate the Gurudeva Tagore on his eightieth birthday.

Tai Chi-Tao
Chungking, China.

O MIGHTY peak of the Himalayas,
You rise in peerless loftiness ;
The plains at your feet look up in awe,
The hills, like sons, surround your knees.
Rich are you in all kinds of jewels,
And the winds rock the clouds around you ;
Those winds and clouds melt down in rivers,
Bringing their blessings to every creature.
On all sides many lands are spread,
Each land has its kings and rulers ;
Mighty souls, the saints and sages,
Humble souls, the common folk.
Some men there are who bring gifts of benevolence,
Some of lofty morality ;
Some teach the way of human society,
Some show the path of release.
Yet various as their teachings are,
They spring from the same root,—
As these many cloud-born streams,
Descend from the same mountain source.
So I sit meditating, my face to the West,
Where the old sages lived their boundless life ;
You are not alone, O pure and mighty soul,
Behold your comrade in the East.

(*Translated from the original Chinese*)

THE SHORT STORIES OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By Diwan Chand Sharma

THE short story, in a sense, was born in India, but after many vicissitudes of fortune it came to perfection in the West. It will be idle to speculate which country in the West has done most to develop this literary form, though it cannot be denied that the U. S. A., England, France and Russia lay claim to this honour. All these countries have done something towards the popularisation and the development of this branch of literature. To assess what each of these countries has done is very difficult, though it must be admitted that each has contributed something to its infinite variety.

This variety is the first thing that one notices if one studies short stories. Between the short story one finds in a popular magazine and the short story which is a work of art, there are innumerable intermediate gradations. One simply marvels at the multiplicity of uses to which it is put. There is a kind of short story which is sheer entertainment. It keeps us guessing till the very last and keeps up our suspense. There are short stories in which a surprise awaits us at every turn. Then there are short stories which are fine exercises in wish-fulfillment. They are full of the milk and honey of sentimentality and are like a syrup for those who have had any bitter experience in life. There are stories which are more or less social studies and throw light on some cross section of society. In some stories the author has no other aim but to give the portrait of a person, and there are not a few short stories in which the author sets out to give a glimpse of some philosophy of life. There are some writers of the short story who wish to convey through it a mood or some kind of atmosphere, and there are others who wish to probe into the depths of the human heart. There are

some writers like Poe who have dealt with the supernatural in their short stories, and there are those like H. G. Wells who have given a free rein to their fancies. The short story has thus been used as a substitute for a lyric, a narrative, a drama, a philosophical treatise, a sociological tract, a psychological note-book, and a book on witch-craft. Yet in every form that it has assumed, its sole purpose has been to entertain the reader.

It is, however, a pity that in India the short story has not shown such a bewildering diversity of aims and methods as in the West. This does not mean that the short story is not a popular literary form in India. A few years ago a Hindi writer computed the number of short stories written in the Hindi language in a year, and came to the conclusion that it ran into a couple of thousands. I think the same must be true of Bengali and the other languages of India. The short story is the most popular literary form in India as in other countries, and the name of its practitioners is legion. But among all these writers there are only two names that are acclaimed as masters all over India. They are Rabindranath Tagore and Munshi Prem Chand. It is needless to say that while the fame of Munshi Prem Chand has not travelled beyond the confines of India, Rabindranath Tagore is an international figure in the realm of the short story.

With a versatility that is almost staggering, Rabindranath has attained to great renown in this department of literature, and the most amazing thing is that though he must have read some masters of the short story in the West, he has not followed any one else's technique. He has evolved a technique of his own, which is curiously unlike that of anybody else. This shows not only the many-sidedness of his genius but also his originality.

Though I have read through hundreds of short stories, I cannot help saying that generally there are three main types. There are stories which reproduce one or more elements of the best-seller in fiction. They assume many shapes and cater to many interests, but they remain essentially superficial. The author merely skims the surface of life, and by depicting stock

characters under new names, devising new and exotic settings, introducing strange complications and playing upon the most well known and easily excitable feelings of the reader, gives a mild kind of pleasure. Then there are short stories which are a kind of propaganda, not loud and crude but veiled and disguised. In these the writer tries to air his pet notions and propagate his views and opinions. If the story of the first type gives us a sense of superficiality, these give us a sense of artificiality. Then there are short stories which give a sense of life, this varied, many-sided, strange and incomprehensible life. Of this type of short story Chekhov is the greatest master. But if one may not be accused of any patriotic bias, one must say that to this category belong the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore. His stories have a depth to which only a few have attained. They are not merely fragments or slices of life, they are life itself.

In going through them I have noticed a few things which I would like to share with other readers. The very first thing which one notices is their comprehensiveness. A short story, they say, is like a glance of the eye, a waving of the hand, a peep at the ever-changing prospect of life. The writer of the short story is like a visitor to the museum which I once saw. The batches of visitors were taken through a museum by a very pompous person, who would not let anyone stay on and linger anywhere. One could stay before an object for only a minute or so, for then the official would rap out : "Make a move on." One could only catch a glimpse, and then one had to move on. Similar is the case with most writers of the short story. They look only for a while at a particular object and then have got to go on to some other thing after recording their impressions of the first. Yet this is not true of the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore. He has developed what an eminent writer and critic has described as the multiplicity of eyes. He does not want to oversimplify life, but he looks at it even in his short stories from so many different points of view. A story like "Mashi"

will make this point clear. The description, analysis and comment are inextricably mixed together. The world of man and the world of nature are shown to exist side by side, and sometimes nature seems to dwarf man altogether and throws his puny struggles into the shade. It seems that man is an insignificant actor playing his part on a very vast stage against a background characterised by immensity and grandeur. Such stories as this make one feel how rich the art of Tagore is. He is not like other short story writers, who emphasise one thing at the expense of everything else. Some excel in descriptions while others show a penetrating psychological insight. There are not a few to whom we go for a fine summing up of life. Rabindranath Tagore combines all these elements and makes his short stories full of absorbing interest.

Another thing that one notices in his short stories is that he is particularly happy when he is describing a solitary, sensitive and much-enduring person. Perhaps there is some spiritual kinship between this type of man and the writer; perhaps it is only by chance that he depicts such persons. No one will, however, deny that his pictures of this type of humanity are difficult to improve upon. This type of person appears again and again in his short stories. Sometimes he is a school-boy and sometimes he is a clerk; at other times it is a long-suffering woman. But one is always apt to come upon such a person in his short stories. His studies in this field are a precious part of our literature.

We talk these days a great deal about psychology, and we know how psychology is the rage at present. We must have an infiltration of it into everything that we write. Above all we must have it in novels and short stories. Again in these a writer should show his knowledge of all kinds of psychology. He should especially show his perception of abnormal psychology. This invasion of literature by psychology has led to many curious experiments and much incomprehensible writing. It seems as if the psychologist attempts not a study of the universal man in terms of a particular individual, but a study of what is peculiar,

of one who is generally an eccentric. Yet there are some writers like Rabindranath Tagore to whom psychology has come of itself and whose psychological insight is not a self-acquired pose but something natural. These writers have delved into the depths of the human heart without any conscious effort. In the august company of such writers will be found Rabindranath Tagore. Each story of his shows his grasp of the fundamental urges of the human heart and the intricate expressions that they find in human deeds and speech. Nor is his domain limited in any way. He feels at home among all sorts and conditions of men. He is susceptible to the workings of the mind of a child ; he is alive to the beatings of the heart of a growing boy ; he portrays the heart of a young woman ; he enters into the feelings of a middle aged person and he knows the weariness and sadness of old age. To those who are interested in psychology it will be a very profitable exercise to find the truth of this statement in his short stories. Suffice it for me to say that a story like "Home Coming" has taught me more about the psychology of adolescence than many a book on this theme. In this story one finds almost all that is worth knowing about boys who are growing into maturity. Their struggles, mental tensions and ambitions are described so graphically that one can never forget them. This is only one of the short stories rich in this kind of insight. There are others too which make profitable reading from this point of view.

Nor are we to forget the mastery with which he selects details and puts them together. In this respect he is like a painter who wants to sketch a complete portrait. No sooner does one think of this quality of his short stories than one is reminded of the description that he has given of Giribala :

> Giribala is overflowing with the exuberance of her youth that seems spilling all over around her, in the folds of her dress, the turning of her neck, the motion of her hands, in the rhythm of her steps, now quick, now languid, in her tinkling anklets and ringing laughter, in her voice and her swift glances. Often she is seen, wrapt in a blue silk, walking on her terrace, in an impulse of

unmeaning restlessness. Her limbs seem eager to dance to the time of an inner music unceasing and unheard. She takes pleasure in merely moving her body, causing ripples to break out in the flood of her young life. Suddenly she will pluck a leaf from a plant in the flower-pot, and throw it up in the sky, and her bangles give a sudden tinkle and the careless grace of her hand, like a bird freed from its cage, flies unseen in the air. With her swift fingers she brushes away from her dress a mere nothing ; standing on tiptoe she peeps over her terrace walls for no cause whatever, and then with a rapid motion turns round to go to another direction, swinging her bunch of keys tied to a corner of her garment. She loosens her hair in an untimely caprice, sitting before her mirror to do it up again, and then in a fit of laziness flings herself upon her bed like a line of stray moonlight, slipping through some opening of the leaves, idling in the shadow.

On reading it no one can miss the essential beauty of this picture. Every detail is significant for each gives an idea of abounding, overflowing life. Nor can anyone miss the element of feminine caprice in this picture. But even when one is reading this piece of artistic prose, one cannot fail to hear the undertones of sadness. Nor can one fail to detect that there is some element of emotional under-nourishment in the life of this woman. The descriptions of Tagore therefore give not only a sense of the physical scene, but also an idea of emotional reverberations. They move always on two planes—the physical and the emotional, and if one is able to do this, one cannot but be accounted an artist.

These are a few of the qualities of his short stories to which one is drawn again and again. These, however, do not exhaust the list. His short stories are a treasure-house of many qualities, and have their place in world literature. They are unique for their technique, their social significance and the human values they embody.

TAGORE—POET AND SEER

By Nolini Kanta Gupta

A GREAT literature seems to have almost invariably a great name attached to it, one name by which it is known and recognised as great. It is the name of the man who releases the inmost potency of that literature, and who marks at the same time the height to which its creative genius has attained or perhaps can ever attain. Homer and Virgil, Dante and Shakespeare, Goethe and Camoens, Firdausi in Persian and Kalidasa in classical Sanskrit, are such names—*numina*, each being the presiding deity, the godhead born full-armed out of the poetic consciousness of the race to which he belongs. Even in the case of France whose language and literature are more a democratic and collective and less an individualistic creation, even there one single Name can be pointed out as the life and soul, the very cream of the characteristic poetic genius of the nation. I am, of course, referring to Racine, Racine who, in spite of Molière and Corneille and Hugo, stands as the most representative French poet, the embodiment of French aesthesis par excellence.

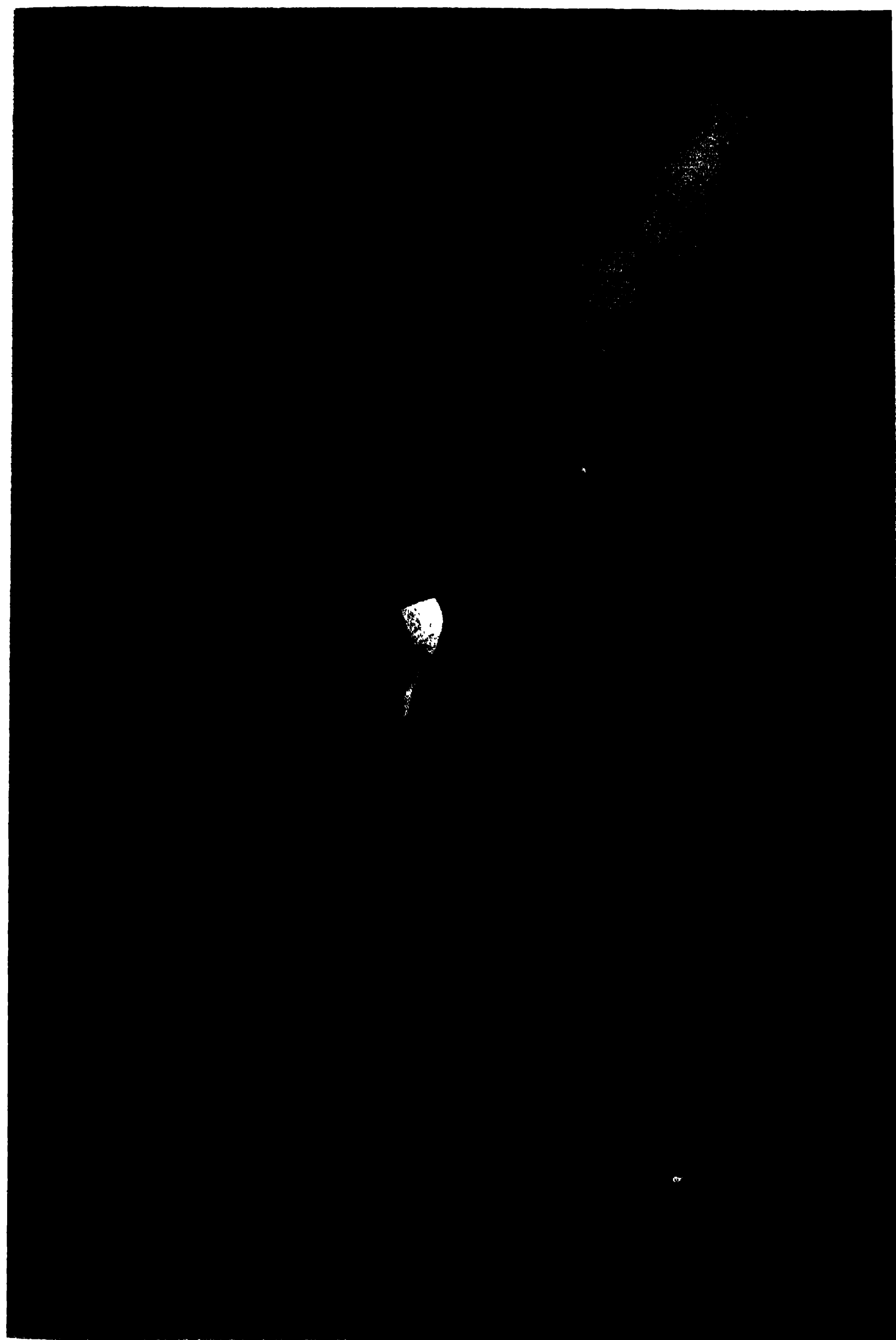
Such a great name is Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali literature. We need not forget Bankim Chandra, nor even Madhusudan : still one can safely declare that if Bengali language and literature belonged to any single person as its supreme liberator and fosterer—*savita* and *pusha*—it is Rabindranath. It was he who lifted that language and literature from what had been after all a provincial and parochial status into the domain of the international and universal. Through him a thing of local value was metamorphosed definitively into a thing of world value.

The miracle that Tagore has done is this : he has brought out the very soul of the race—its soul of lyric fervour and grace, of intuitive luminosity and poignant sensibility, of beauty and harmony and delicacy. It is this that he has made living and

vibrant, raised almost to the highest pitch and amplitude in various modes in the utterance of his nation. What he always expresses, in all his creations, is one aspect or another, a rhythm or a note of the soul movement. It is always a cry of the soul, a profound experience in the inner heart that wells out in the multifarious cadences of his poems. It is the same *motif* that finds a local habitation and a name in his short stories, perfect gems, masterpieces among world's masterpieces of art. In his dramas and novels it is the same element that has found a wider canvas for a more detailed and graphic notation of its play and movement. I would even include his essays (and certainly his memoirs) within the sweep of the same master-note. An essay by Rabindranath is as characteristic of the poet as any lyric poem of his. This is not to say that the essays are devoid of a solid intellectual content, a close-knit logical argument, an acute and penetrating thought movement, nor is it that his novels or dramas are mere lyrics drawn out and thinned, lacking in the essential elements of a plot and action and character. What I mean is that over and above these factors which Tagore's art possesses to a considerable degree, there is an imponderable element, a flavour, a breath from elsewhere that suffuses the entire creation, something that can be characterised only as the soul-element. It is this presence that makes whatever the poet touches not only living and graceful but instinct with something that belongs to the world of gods, something celestial and divine, something that meets and satisfies man's deepest longing and aspiration.

I have been laying especial stress upon this aspect of Tagore's genius, because humanity is in great need of it today, because all has gone wrong with the modern world since it lost touch with its soul and was beguiled into a path lighted by false glimmers and will-o-the-wisps, lures of a superficial and infra-human consciousness, or into the by-ways and backwashes and aberrations of a sophisticated intellectualism.

Tagore is modern, as modern as reasonably and sensibly



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one can be ; he is a modern, but not a modernist. One is modern when one is inspired and moved by the spirit of the Time, one is modernist when one is bound to the letter, to the external formulas of the law of the Zeit-Geist. You remain modern if the new consciousness enters and dwells in your nature and character, you become modernist as soon as it degenerates into a *tic* and a mannerism.

The passage of mediaevalism to modernism can be defined as the passage from the local and parochial to the general and universal. The mediaeval consciousness is a segmented or linear consciousness : it is the view, at a time, from one particular angle of vision. The modern consciousness, on the other hand, is or tends to be a global view-point, a circular consciousness. The unilateral mentality proper to mediaevalism may be deep and penetrating and far reaching, extending to the hidden and high realities, even to the highest and the most secret—to God and Soul and Immortality ; it would still be a one-sided vision and achievement. It is the characteristic function of the modern consciousness to survey things not from a single point of view, but from all points of view, even the most disparate and incommensurable. The relativity of all experiences—not necessarily their illusoriness—is the great modern discovery ; it is the parent of modern (scientific) scepticism and agnosticism ; it is also the basis of a large, a global synthesis, which was never possible till now and which is the promise of tomorrow.

Modernism implies a natural broadening of the mind and life, a greater capacity to understand and endorse and appreciate divergent and even contrary and contradictory experiences and stand-points. Thus, brotherhood to the mediaeval man meant bringing together mankind under the dominion of one cult or creed—it is the extension of a tribal feeling. Brotherhood in a modern consciousness would mean an inner union and commensurability that can subsist even in the midst of a great diversity of taste and feeling and experience.

Tagore is modern in respect of all these higher aptitudes

that man has gained today. He has the brilliance and curiosity of an alert and strong intelligence, the refined sensibility of a pagan and scientific intellect, he has an infinite sense of irony and humour and, above all, he has that in him,—a genial plasticity and sympathy and a warm sense of "wide commonalty",—which makes him easily a citizen of the world, feeling absolutely at home all over the world.

The breath of modernism that Tagore has brought into the life and letters of the Bengali race is, I repeat, suffused with a soul-feeling—a sense of refinement and dignity, wideness and catholicity and urbanity in the inner make-up of life-attitude and consciousness, a feeling that one no longer lives in his village, confined to its insular limits, but that one lives a life coterminous with human life at large and at its best ; one is cosmopolitan in the noblest sense of the world and one has to move and act and speak in a manner becoming such a position. A high sense of all the aristocratic virtues, plus a certain sunshine of wit and playful intelligence that prevents the serious and the lofty from becoming grim and Dantesque are part of the gifts that Tagore has brought us and made a living element of our literary and even social character.

Tagore is modern, because his modernism is based upon a truth not local and temporal, but eternal and universal, something that is the very bed-rock of human culture and civilisation. Indeed, Tagore is also ancient, as ancient as the Upaniṣads. The great truths, the basic realities experienced and formulated by the ancients ring clear and distinct in the core of all his artistic creation. Tagore's intellectual make-up may be as rationalistic and scientific as that of any typical modern man. Nor does he discard the good things (*preya*) that earth and life offer to man for his banquet ; and he does not say like the bare ascetic : *anyā vācho vimuñchatha*, "abandon everything else". But even like one of the Upaniṣadic Rishis, the great Yājñavalkya, he would possess and enjoy his share of terrestrial as well as of spiritual wealth—*ubhayameva*. In a world of modernism,

although he acknowledges and appreciates mental and vital and physical values, he does not give them the place demanded for them. He has never forgotten the one thing needful. He has not lost the moorings of the soul. He has continued to nestle close to the eternal verities that sustain earth and creation and give a high value and purpose to man's life and creative activity.

In these iconoclastic times, we are liable, both in art and in life, to despise and even to deny certain basic factors which were held to be almost indispensable in the old world. The great triads—the True, the Beautiful and the Good, or God, Soul and Immortality—are of no consequence to a modernist mind : these mighty words evoke no echo in the heart of a contemporary human being. Art and Life meant in the old world something decent, if not great. They were perhaps, as I have already said, framed within narrow limits, certain rigid principles that cribbed and cabined the human spirit in many ways ; but they were not *anarchic*, they obeyed a law, a dharma, which they considered as an ideal, a standard to look up to and even live up to. The modernist is an anarchic being in all ways. He does not care for old-world verities which seem to him mere convention or superstition. Truth or Beauty or Harmony are non-existent for him : if at all they exist they bear a totally different connotation, the very opposite of that which is normally accepted.

The modernist does not ask ; is it good ? is it beautiful ? He asks : is it effective ? is it expressive ? And by effectivity and expressiveness he means something nervous and physical. Expressiveness to him would mean the capacity to tear off the veil over what once was considered not worth the while or decent to uncover. A strange recklessness and shamelessness, an unhealthy and perverse curiosity, characteristic of the Asura and the Pisacha, of the beings of the underworld, mark the movement of the modernist. But I forget. The Modernist is not always an anarchist, for he too seeks to establish a New Order ; indeed he arrogates to himself that mission and declares it to be his and his alone. Obviously it is not the order of the higher

gods of Olympus : these have been ousted and dethroned. We are being led back to the mysteries of an earlier race, reverting to an infra-evolutionary status, into the arcana of Thor and Odin, godlings of an elemental Nature.

In such a world Tagore is a voice and a beacon from over the heights of the old world declaring and revealing the verities that are eternal and never die. They who seek to kill them do so at their peril. Tagore is a great poet: as such he is close to the heart of Bengal. He is a great Seer : as such humanity will claim him as its own.



TAGORE'S CHILDHOOD POETRY

By Humayun Kabir

BENGAL is a land of rivers and riparian people are almost invariably self-centred individualists. This individualism in the quality of their mind has made them rebels from the earliest times, rebels against established institutions, customs and beliefs. This explains why the revolt against Brahminical traditions in the Buddhist age was more penetrating and extensive in Bengal than perhaps in any other part of India. This explains why the advent of Islam in India saw the Bengali mind accept its challenge of democracy and individualism with such far-reaching and permanent effects. This also explains why the rise of English power was accompanied by a change in the Bengali consciousness which has produced the finest art and literature of modern India. Is it any wonder that the work of Tagore, who represents the finest efflorescence of the Bengali genius, should exhibit as its dominant tone the glorification of human individuality ?

The poetry of Tagore in all its extensive reaches is governed by this intensely individual and human note. The process of experience has brought increasing variety to his work, the knowledge of many lands and many ages has enriched his personality and mind. His work has thus achieved a universal humanity which transcends the limitations of race, age and climate. In spite of the development and growth, the basic note of his poetry has not, however, changed. From its earliest beginnings till today, his poetry is resplendent with the glorification of human values.

It is this exaltation of human values that accounts for Tagore's repudiation of asceticism. He sees the field of man's highest activity in this world and its multifold demands and relations. Defeat and disillusionment is the lot of man on earth, but man's glory lies in rising above them and striving to achieve

his ideals here. Those who refuse to face the conflicts of life and seek refuge in an abandonment of the world suffer final defeat of the spirit. Difficulties are not to be feared so much as the tendency to evade difficulties. The apparent defeats in life do not lower the moral stature of a man. Loss of morality results from the escapist mentality which is afraid to face the tasks of life. Those who have denied human relations and human values have learnt to their bitter cost that such denial is not merely futile but defeats its own purpose. In song and poem, in story and drama, in essay and novel, Tagore has sought to express this truth in a thousand ways. The reiteration is itself evidence of his anxiety to get it across to his people, and yet in spite of all his efforts, he has often felt that his countrymen have not realised the implications of his message.

This repugnance to asceticism explains the fusion of the poet and the practical man in Tagore. He has felt that he must not only dream beautiful dreams but work to realise them in the light of common day. A salvation whose price is the torture of the flesh has no appeal for him. His ideal is a liberation of the spirit in which the exquisite demands of life are fulfilled and transcended. Death may be the end of life and the weary spirit may seek in its oblivion a respite from the struggles of existence, but Tagore's poetry is full of the exultation of life in the midst of its manifold bondage.

Expansion and development of the personality is therefore the aim that Tagore set himself from his early youth. He loves man and not merely the abstraction of humanity. The perfection for which he strives is the fulfilment of the life of the individual, not that of an impersonal and bodiless concept. Each man has his own uniqueness revealed in the countless trivialities which constitute his life history. The idea of a universal humanity has also attracted his imagination at times and he has conceived of the universal man as the conglomerate embodiment of individual men. Each cell of our body has its own separate life, and yet contributes to the life of the body as a whole. Similarly,

individual men have their separate entities and yet constitute the elements of the life of universal man. The idea of the individual as a cell of corporate humanity has been developed in some of the recent writings of Tagore, but it is noteworthy that even this conception is based on the recognition of the importance of the individual as such.

This recognition of the value of the individual is the basis of Tagore's lyricism. The individual is of immense value and hence every event of his life is charged with deep significance. Even the momentary is not trivial. Its lack of quantity is compensated by the intensity of its quality. Without this deep love for life in all its manifestations, could he have worked with such devotion and passion to immortalise the feeling of the moment in a work of art ? The drama of man's struggle with invisible powers of the universe and his final defeat gives us tragedy. The epic is the record of his conflict with fate while the lyric is the crystallisation of the splendour and beauty of his momentary life.

This sense of the value of the individual and the individual moments of life explains why there is an underlying note of hope even in the saddest of lyric poems. Our sweetest songs are those that tell of the saddest thoughts only because the sadness is itself lit up with a sense of value and dignity of human experience. Tagore also has always been an optimist. When his countrymen have neglected his work, he has not lost hope. In his poetry and his practical achievement, he has drawn sustenance from the secret sources of his own spirit and persisted in his quest alone. The beauty he has created is today the common possession of the human race, but his faith has never failed that his dream of a Viswa Bharati will also one day be the heritage of all men.

This faith in man and his sense of the value of the individual moments of experience also help to explain why Tagore has been so great a poet of childhood and innocence. Practical considerations dominate the interest of the average man and even poets often succumb to its insidious influence. Tagore has valued life in all its manifestations and realised that the moods

and feelings of the child, trivial as they might seem to grown-ups with their own small vanities and scale of values, are charged with the deepest significance for him. Not merely this, but the child's experiences have in them a freshness and beauty which the adult can hardly ever feel. The process of repetition and routine blunts the perceptions and dulls the sensitiveness of the grown-up. The child is full of eager expectancy and lives in a continuous renascence of wonder. Tagore has caught in his poetry this mood of wonder and expectancy and that is why he is perhaps the greatest poet of childhood that the world has ever seen.



RABINDRANATH AND BENGALI PROSODY

By Prabodh-Chandra Sen

I

It is a curious fact that though the lofty thoughts and beautiful imageries of Rabindranath as a poet have been admired all over the world, the wonderful richness of his experiments in Bengali metrics has hardly attracted the appreciative attention of his innumerable readers even in his native province of Bengal. The non-Bengali readers of the poet, unfamiliar with the original language in which his poems are composed, cannot possibly enjoy the rhythmical richness of his incredibly large number of poems composed in course of more than half a century, a period during which the life of the Bengali people has been vibrating with a new spirit of renaissance. People outside Bengal may well appreciate the musical value of his songs, because the language of music has a universal appeal and is not inseparably tied down to the spoken tongue in which the words of a song are clothed. But the only rhythm of Rabindranath's poems which they can possibly understand is the more or less irregular and prosaic rhythm of a foreign language to be found in his English version of *Gitāñjali* which does not and cannot represent even a very distant echo of the living rhythmic flow of the original Bengali poems. The fact is that even if the sense of a poet's words can be translated into a foreign language, the sound cannot.

What is apparently surprising is that even the Bengali readers of Rabindranath are not, I think, quite conscious of the wonderful variety and value of his metres, though, of course, the heart of every Bengali reader is charmed with the enchanting intermingling of sound and sense in his poems. The reason is not far to seek. The older generation of the Bengalis with a few

exceptions was almost shocked by the quick succession of innovations in the field of metrics by the prolific genius of Rabindranath, and before it could adapt itself to, and grow appreciative of, these creations, it had run the course of its life and had disappeared from the scene. And the present generation has been, so to speak, born and brought up in the rhythmic atmosphere of Rabindranath, and as such we are apt to be as unconscious of the soul-sustaining currents of his rhythm as we are of the life-giving air that we breathe every moment. Nature that surrounds us throughout our life is a museum of endless beauty of sound, colour and form, but it requires an amount of conscious training even to be aware of their existence, not to speak of enjoying them. Rabindranath's literature has created for us, as it were, a second nature in which we live, move and have our being, and as such we are apt to forget the vast wealth of sound and rhythm which we have been fortunate enough to inherit. Hence the necessity, even on the part of the Bengali readers of his poems, of conscious training for a proper appreciation of the innumerable metrical innovations of Rabindranath.

This article is, however, not primarily meant for Bengali-knowing readers so that English had to be chosen as its medium. But it must be admitted at the very outset that it is not possible to do full justice to a subject like this in a foreign language, specially because prosody deals not with the sense of a poet's words but with their sound. So I think it will be very difficult, and indeed sometimes quite impossible, to convey in English the sound-value of the metrical art of Rabindranath, even apart from the fact that quotations from his works will necessarily have to be in Bengali though in Roman transliteration. I shall, therefore, try to give my readers only a rough idea about the various metres that were in use in Bengali verse before the advent of Rabindranath, and the rich and powerful variety introduced into the rhythmic movements of Bengali metres as a result of his incessant experiments which, incidentally, have by no means

come to an end, though he has crossed the threshold of his eighty-first year. It must also be admitted that even at best such an attempt can convey only the barest idea of the subject to non-Bengali readers. I, therefore, undertake the present discussion not only under an initial difficulty inherent in the subject itself, but also with some diffidence born of the consciousness that I am working through a medium which is quite unlike the poet's own language.

Before I take up a consideration of the metrical wealth that has been added to our literature by Rabindranath, it will be necessary to give some idea of the underlying general principles of Bengali versification. Unlike music which has very little to do with the accents and intonations of a spoken language, prosody has to depend to a very large extent on the characteristic speech-habits of a particular people. Indeed, it is the systematisation of the peculiar characteristics of a particular language and its pronunciation that constitutes the art of versification in that language.

We should begin by undertaking an examination of the various movements of verse-rhythm. Such movements may within certain limits be well compared to those of the hands of a time-piece. We all know that on a time-piece four different movements go on simultaneously, viz., those of the second, minute and hour hands, and the twelve-hourly or semi-diurnal movement of which two complete circuits cover a whole day. Similarly, if we closely examine the dynamic character of a couplet of verses, we shall find that it also involves the simultaneous existence of four different movements, viz., those of the syllable, the accent-group, the foot, and the verse, two of which last go to form a couplet. But there is this difference between the movements of the watch and those of the couplet that while the former are rigidly uniform and admit of no variation whatsoever, the latter offer a kind of deep underlying unity in a world of wonderful diversity.

According to the analogy just referred to, the syllable

corresponds to the second of the time-piece, and just as a second, as the unit of time, lies at the root of the whole system of the watch, so a syllable, as the unit of articulate sound, ultimately governs the whole system of metrics. As such it deserves to occupy a primary place in any discussion of prosody.

What, then, is a syllable ? It may be defined as the *unit* of pronunciation forming a word or part of a word and containing one vowel sound, monophthong (*ayugma-svara*) or diphthong (*yugma-svara*), and often consonant(s) on one or both sides of it. In other words, a syllable is a vowel (monophthong or diphthong), either standing by itself or flanked by one or more consonants on one or both sides, the whole being uttered together, that is, with a *single* effort or impulse of the voice. There is no term in Sanskrit or the modern Indian vernaculars which may be regarded as equivalent to the English word "syllable" without any ambiguity. *Akshara* and *Varna* are both used in Sanskrit to mean either a letter or a syllable as the case may be. Now, this ambiguous character of these words makes them unsuitable for use in a scientific discussion where precision of meaning is most necessary. For all practical purposes we may regard the expression *svaramaya* or *svarāsrita dhvani-vyashṭi* or simply *dhvani-vyashṭi* as an equivalent of the term syllable.

In order to determine the quantitative value of syllables as also to ascertain their use in Bengali versification, it is necessary to classify them into two groups, viz. (1) open syllables, and (2) closed syllables. Open syllables are those that contain a monophthong and are not followed by any consonant. Thus the word *ka.vi* consists of two open syllables. Closed syllables, on the other hand, contain either a monophthong followed by one or more consonants, or a diphthong which may or may not be followed by consonants. Thus the first syllables of the words *sun.da.ra*, *sau.ra.bha* and *saun.dar.ya* are closed. The expressions "open and closed syllables" have been conveniently rendered into Bengali as *ayugma* and *yugma dhvani* respectively.

Now, the values of both kinds of syllables in Bengali

versification depend on the mode of their pronunciation. An open syllable, when pronounced singly, invariably takes twice as much time as would be required to pronounce it along with other syllables. Thus the whole word *ka.vi* when pronounced in the normal way would require two units of time called *mātrā* or *mora.* But if we pronounce the syllables *ka* and *vi* separately, each of them will be naturally lengthened and require two units of time, that is, each of them should be regarded as a long or bimoric *(dvi-mātraka)* syllable.

Chali chali | pā- pā- | ṭali ṭali | jāy

Here each syllable of the first and third sections or feet of the line is open and unimoric because pronounced along with others. But the two open syllables of the second foot (*parvan*) are pronounced separately and are therefore long and bimoric. It should be particularly stated here that open syllables are very rarely pronounced singly and therefore the use of bimoric open syllables is seldom to be found in Bengali versification.

Closed syllables also have two modes of pronunciation. A closed syllable may be so lengthened as to occupy the space of two *morae*, or it may be compressed into the space of one *mora* only. This dual character of the closed syllable is to be found very frequently in Bengali pronunciation and it is this which is to a great extent responsible for imparting a very rich rhythmic variety to Bengali versification. Though both forms of closed syllables have always been used by Bengali poets through ages, yet it was Rabindranath who first discovered in a conscious manner the potential energy latent in the closed syllable, and when he released that energy it created for Bengali poetry a new variety of rhythm which has enriched our literature to no small degree. But before proceeding further I must here exemplify this double use of the closed syllable.

E. sun. dar | a. ran. yer | pal. la. ver | sta. re
—Vasundharā, *Sonār Tarī.*

In this line there are three words (*sun.dar*, *a.ran.yer* and *pal.la.ver*)

each of which contains two closed syllables. Of these six, three (*dar*, *yer*, *ver*) are ultimate (*i.e.*, belonging to the end of a word) and three (*sun*, *ran*, *pal*) are either initial or pen-ultimate. What is important to notice here is that all the three ultimate closed syllables are long in pronunciation and are therefore bimoric, while the other three are short and unimoric. The open syllables are unimoric everywhere. Calculating in this way we shall find that each of the first three *parvans* of the line are tetramoric while the last *parvan*, which is catalectic or incomplete, is bimoric. There is a very large group of metres forming by far the major portion of Bengali poetry, in which *both* the shortened and lengthened forms of closed syllables come into full play ; this group of metres may, therefore, be properly termed as Composite or *Yaugika*.

There is another group of metres in which the closed syllables are always pronounced in their lengthened form and are therefore always bimoric. This group may be viewed as the Bengali counterpart of the Sanskrit *Jāti* or *Mātrāvritta* group of metres.

Pan.cha.śare | dag. dha ka're | karechha eki | san. nyāsî
Viś. va. may | diyechha tāre | chhaḍāye
—Madan-bhasmer pare, *Kalpanā.*

In these two lines there are four initial closed syllables (*pan*, *dag*, *san*, *viś*) and one ultimate (*may*), all of which are long and bimoric. A calculation on this line will show that all the *parvans* of these two verses are pentamoric except the final two which are catalectic and consist of four and three *morae* respectively. This is the basic principle governing all metres belonging to the *mātrāvritta* group. It should be mentioned here that this group of metres with all its variety and richness is almost entirely the creation of Rabindranath.

There is a third group of metres in Bengali prosody which may be termed Syllabic (translated into Bengali as *Svara-vritta*) because these metres are primarily based on the number of

syllables in each foot. An example will make the nature of this group of metres clear to the general reader.

Āmi yadi | janma nitem | Kālidāser | kāle
Daive hatem | daśam ratna | nava-ratner | māle
—Sekāl, *Kshaṇikā.*

All the feet of these two lines (except the terminal ones which are catalectic) are tetrasyllabic, that is, each foot consists of four syllables irrespective of the open and closed varieties.

There is some controversy about the real character of this group of metres. Many, including the late poet Dvijendralal and Satyendranath, definitely regard them as syllabic. But Satyendranath thought at the same time that though primarily syllabic, these metres had a quantitative basis as well, and according to him each tetrasyllabic foot might be considered as pentamoric from the quantitative point of view. Rabindranath, however, thinks that these metres are primarily hexamoric, though generally based on four (and not infrequently on three and very rarely on two) syllables. Mr. A. D. Mukherji, on the other hand, considers this kind of metres to be primarily neither hexamoric nor pentamoric but tetramoric. Without entering into a controversy on the matter, for which this is not the proper place, I confess that I am tempted to take a position midway between that of Satyendranath and Rabindranath. That is to say, in my opinion these metres are primarily tetra-syllabic with a hexamoric basis. For had these metres been merely tetrasyllabic, then any number of feet consisting of four open syllables could have been introduced without any prejudice to their rhythm, but actually they cannot. On the other hand, had they been merely pentamoric or hexamoric, they might admit amongst them feet consisting of five or six unimoric open syllables, but this is not possible in actual practice, as in that case the rhythmic movement of these metres would be disturbed. So in this article I shall describe them as syllabic. This syllabic group of metres occupies a very prominent place in modern Bengali literature, thanks to the genius of Rabindra-

nath which has been incessantly on the search for new principles of versification.

The *Yaugika* or Composite, the *Mātrāvritta* or Quantitative and the *Svaravritta* or Syllabic, these are the three main groups of Bengali metres based on the rhythmic movement of the syllable. They may be regarded as the three main tributaries which have fed the great stream of versification and immensely enriched the Bengali literature. But it should be remembered that these three main groups of metres represent only the syllabic movement of rhythmic language. I have already referred to the fact that there are three other movements of rhythm, viz., those of the accent-group, the foot and the verse, corresponding to the minute, hour and semi-diurnal movements of the time-piece respectively. The space at our disposal does not permit us to discuss them in detail, nor is it, in fact, indispensable for our present purpose.

I am afraid I have entered into technicalities which may not be easily intelligible to readers unfamiliar with the original language of the poet's works. But the subject under discussion is a technical one, the science of Bengali metrics is still in its infancy and differs considerably from those prevailing in other parts of India. The details set forth above represent in these conditions but a minimum which could not be avoided if justice were to be done to the subject unless, of course, I were to confine myself to the far easier and much more agreeable task of loudly singing fulsome praises of the greatest literary genius of our times. It is also my hope that these details may serve as an incentive to those who are interested in the subject, to make further explorations in the field.

II

As regards Rabindranath's place in the metrical development of Bengali versification, almost the first thing that I should say is that it is his writings alone which have made such an analysis



of Bengali metrics possible. Versification as an art was in such an undeveloped state before the advent of Rabindranath that a proper analysis of metrics based on the genius of the Bengali language was not possible at that time. Rabindranath with his fine instinct for detecting the rhythmic beauty as also the defects of the then existing metres, has not only perfected them but has added ever newer strings of metres to the lyre of the Bengali muse.

So diverse are the forms and so subtle and delicate are the various sounds which one finds in his metres that it is impossible to deal with them comprehensively within the limits of an article. We shall therefore confine ourselves to a consideration only of the more salient features.

To begin with, of the three main groups of metres explained in a previous section, viz., the *Yaugika*, the *Mātrāvritta* and the *Svaravritta*, only the first may be said to have existed in a more or less developed form almost up to the close of the ninth decade of the nineteenth century, when Rabindranath, then in the prime of his life, began to startle the country by the introduction of new principles of versification. Even this *yaugika* group of metres did not reveal its true nature even to the best of poets though this had been in use for centuries, that is to say, since the time of Kṛttivāsa and Chaṇḍidāsa who probably flourished in the fifteenth century. It was really in a fluid condition and oscillated between the *Svaravritta* and *Mātrāvritta* forms of rhythm, sometimes the one and sometimes the other making its appearance in a composition whose basic metre was *yaugika*. The reason is that in those days poems were not meant to be read or recited in the modern fashion which, keeping as it does the sense of a poem in the foreground, does not essentially differ from prose-reading. They were actually sung or recited in a sing-song fashion, the result of which was that the metrical defects of a poem were to a great extent made up by the tune of music or by the drawling cadence of such recitation.

About the middle of the eighteenth century there flourished in Bengal a master-artist in the domain of prosody named Bhārata-Chandra Rāy (d. 1760) who endeavoured to place the prevailing metres of those days on a sure foundation. But unfortunately the principle chosen by him in order to impart some sort of consistency and uniformity to those metres was that of the *akshara*. *Akshara*, as mentioned before, is a word of uncertain meaning ; sometimes it means a syllable and sometimes a letter ; e.g., both the words *punyavān* and *punyavatî* are regarded in Bengali as consisting of four aksharas, though certainly the first is trisyllabic and the second tetrasyllabic. The truth is that modern Bengali writing is neither fully syllabic like the ancient *Brāhmî* or other scripts of India nor wholly alphabetical like the Roman, though it must be admitted that it is more syllabic than alphabetical. Hence any metre based on a principle of amphibious character and of uncertain meaning like the *akshara* is bound to be faulty, and so Bharata-Chandra's efforts to place the then existing metres on a consistent principle could not escape this defect. What resulted from his efforts was the development of a group of metres which might be called "Pseudo-syllabic" and which I have termed *Akshara-vritta*. This pseudo-syllabic or *akshara-vritta* form of versification continued to be in use till the advent of Rabindranath.

Rabindranath, who had been experimenting with Bengali metres since the days of the *Sandhyā-Sangīta* (1881), discovered that a metre based on a defective system of writing, which did not represent the corresponding sound-values in a consistent manner, could not form a safe foundation for versification, and so he began to disregard the number of *aksharas* in a foot or verse and substituted a system based on *sound* for a system based on *writing*. The outcome is what we have called the *Yaugika* or Composite group of metres. But this was done so slowly and silently that the revolution has been scarcely felt even in the present time. This transformation of the *akshara-vritta* or pseudo-syllabic metres into the *yaugika* or the composite is an

achievement of such fundamental character that this alone would have sufficed to make a poet's name immortal. This will be fully demonstrated if and when Bengali comes to be written in a fully alphabetical form instead of in the semi-syllabic system as at present.

As to the forms of versification which have been fashioned out of the material of this group of metres, they are so large in number and varied in character that space will allow us to discuss only one or two of them, though it is these that catch the popular ear or imagination more than the fundamental innovations. It is well-known that Michael Madhusūdana Datta, the greatest poetical genius before the time of Rabindranath, rid the old *Payāra* system of verses (each consisting of fourteen units or *morae*) of its traditional sing-song drawl, shattered the shackles of its inevitable rimes as well as of its rigidly regular system of pauses and imparted to it the majestic movement and the roaring sound of ocean-waves. Thus were evolved the unrimed and enjambed or run-on lines of long waves commonly known as the Blank Verse out of the short-waved riming lines of the *Payār* of fourteen units, which became a fit vehicle for a grand epic named the *Meghanādavadha Kāvya* resembling in many respects the *Paradise Lost* of Milton.

This new rhythmic movement of the enjambed verses of Madhusūdana underwent further development along different lines at the hands of Rabindranath. Firstly, Rabindranath saw that the enjambed movement of lines is the essential feature of the so-called blank verse and its rimelessness is only of secondary importance ; on the contrary, in short poems of enjambed verses rimes might be regarded as an additional source of beauty. So he began to work along that line, and the result is the beautiful riming enjambed verses of such poems as *Meghadūta* and *Ahalyār Prati* (1890, *Mānasī*). Secondly, he found that in spite of the *enjambement* the fixed length of fourteen units stood in the way of creating shorter or longer waves according to the poet's necessity. So he gradually modified in two ways the fixed length

of fourteen units as adopted by Madhusūdana in his enjambed verses. (1) He experimented with longer lines of eighteen units and succeeded in finding out a vehicle more suitable to convey ideas and thoughts of a serious nature. It may be mentioned that a beginning in this direction was made by the poet's eldest brother, late Dvijendranath Tagore, in his *Svapna-Prayāna*. This new variety of enjambed verses of eighteen units falls into two classes : the rimed and the unrimed. Of the first group perhaps the earliest is *Samudrer Prati*, written as early as 1893 *(Sonār Tarī)*. A beautiful group of poems belonging to the second class is to be found in the *Prāntik* (1938), which is one of his latest works. (2) The poet also felt that the fixed length of a line whether of fourteen or of eighteen units was itself an impediment in the way of the free movement of a verse and so in a number of poems he dispensed with the conventional length altogether. He thus evolved a new variety of rhythm in which the fullest freedom has been given to the verse-movement.

This variety of rhythm has been given the significant name of *Muktaka* in Bengali, the main feature of this form of versification being that the length of a verse-wave may vary directly with the poet's necessity. The first signs of the poet's impatience with unnecessary conventional restrictions particularly with regard to the fixed length of verses appeared as early as 1881 in his *Sandhyā-Sangīta*. But he was not satisfied with his early experiments with *Muktaka* except in one case, namely, in his poem entitled *Nishphala Kāmanā* (1887), one of the finest poems in *Mānasī*, his first great work. But his later experiments with this form of rhythm were not only eminently successful, but may be said to have taken by storm the imagination of the reading public as they began to make their appearance in the year 1914 in the well-known literary journal the *Sabuj Patra*. These poems, which were subsequently published in *Balākā*, constitute a land-mark in the history of the verse-evolution of Bengal. The *muktaka* form of versification also may be both rimed and unrimed. The first group of *muktaka* poems to be found in *Balākā* as well as

many others published later on, belong to the rimed category. But the first successful experiment in *muktaka*, that is, the *Nishphala Kāmanā* referred to above, is rimeless as also many beautiful poems to be found in *Pariśesha* (1932) and the twin works, *Rogaśayvāy* and *Ārogya* published in 1941.

As regards the *Mātrāvritta* group of metres, it may be said that in their present form they are entirely the creation of Rabindranath. It is true that this variety of metres was quite well-known not only in Sanskrit and Prakrit literatures, in which latter it was indeed the prevailing form of metres, but also in medieval Bengali literature. In Sanskrit and Prakrit poems these metres were based mainly on the use of fixed long vowels and secondarily on the lengthened use of closed syllables. In normal Bengali pronunciation, however, the long vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet have lost their original bimoric character and have become unimoric, unless, of course they are lengthened under special circumstances. This change in the Bengali vowel-pronunciation was complete even in the middle ages as is proved by the use of the Pseudo-syllabic group of metres by many poets.

A section of poets, particularly the Vaishnava *Padāvali*-writers, no doubt used an artifical form of *mātrāvritta* metres in which long vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet were given a bimoric value in spite of their normal short use in Bengali pronunciation. It should be noted, however, that they could not uniformly maintain the bimoric value of long vowels, the normal short use of these asserting itself very often in their composition. So the unimoric use of long vowels is to be very frequently found in the *Padāvalis*, nor is the long use of snort vowels rare in such compositions. As these *Padāvalis* were actually sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments, their artificial character did not or could not produce any unpleasant effect on the audience ; rather the artificial use of long vowels was helpful in giving the musical notes a deep and grave sound characteristic of classical languages. Bhārata-Chandra experimented in the eighteenth century with these artificial long vowels along Sanskrit

lines with a degree of success not attained by others. In the nineteenth century such use of long vowels in the Sanskrit fashion was a favourite with many poets, such as Rangalāl Banerji, Baladeva Pālit and many others.

Rabindranath very early in his life was charmed by the deep notes of such vowels, and following in the footsteps of the Vaishnava *Padāvali*-writers published a collection of *Padāvalis* under the pseudonym of Bhānusiṃha which was really meant to be synonymous with the word "Rabindra". These *Padāvalis* of Bhānusiṃha with their artificial use of long vowels were so successful that they created a sensation at the time (1877) though they came from the pen of a budding poet who was only sixteen years old. But Rabindranath very soon discovered that such *mātrāvritta* metres with an artificial use of long vowels with an archaic air about them, and meant to be read, and not sung in the old fashion, would soon become monotonous and unfit to be a suitable medium for living thoughts clothed in a living language. So he abandoned the use of the old type of *mātrāvritta* metres with long vowels except in some songs, such as the two national anthems, namely, those beginning with *Jana-gana-mana-adhināyaka* and *Deśa deśa nandita kari*, in which the success of the use of long vowels is beyond all question. He discarded the old artificial and archaic form of *mātrāvritta* metres and created a new type of *mātrāvritta*, which is based on the lengthened use of closed syllables, as explained in a previous section, and which is eminently suitable for modern ideas in a modern language. This new type of *mātrāvritta* metres began to make its first appearance as early as 1887 in a series of poems which have been collected in his *Mānasī* which may be regarded as a store-house of rhythm and metres. Since then this new *mātrāvritta* has been considered in Bengal as the best medium of all lyrical poetry in which the genius of Rabindranath and of the Bengali people excels and finds its best expression.

As regards the different forms into which the *mātrāvritta* group has been moulded, I may refer here only to some forms of

the foot or *parvan*. The tetramoric foot was used for the first time in a poem entitled *Nisphala Upahāra* (1888), published in *Mānasī* ; the pentamoric (eg. *Apekshā*), the hexamoric (eg. *Bhul-bhāngā*, *Suradāser Prārthanā*) and the heptamoric (eg. *Vadhu*) feet also appeared in *Mānasī* (1890). All these varieties of the *mātrāvritra* which appeared in the same book and struck people with wonder, marked an epoch in the history of Bengali metrics. But where did he draw his inspiration from for the creation of so many varieties of metres ? Though the sources of his inspiration deserve to be thoroughly explored I do not intend to occupy myself with that question here. I may only say that Rabindranath with his natural attraction for things beautiful has devoted a good deal of attention to all literary forms, and has a sensitive genius which is ever ready to respond to new impressions from whatever sources they may come. So we find that Sanskrit metres especially those of Jayadeva, the well-known lyric poet of Bengal, the metres of the Vaishnava poets of the mediaeval ages, the metres of even folk-poetry as well as the bars of music for which he has such an inborn aptitude, all under the magic influence of his genius go to form a wonderful synthesis and thus embellish the metrical wealth of Bengali poetry which has deservedly become a source of pride and inspiration to the sons of Bengal.

It has been mentioned before that the introduction of the *Svaravritta* or syllabic group of metres as a medium of serious poems into modern Bengali literature is to be attributed to Rabindranath who with untiring zeal has sought to evolve new vehicles of expression. This syllabic group of metres is, however, not a creation of the poet. It had always existed in Bengal as the metrical medium for lullabies, folk-songs and unwritten popular ballads and other forms of folk-poetry ; it had even found its way into written literature, though always occupying a low status, and had been considered to be a fit medium only for comic and other light forms of poetry. Thus we find its use in the writings of Lochanadās and Govindadās (sixteenth

century) of Bhārata-Chandra and Rāmaprasād (eighteenth century) and specially in the works of Iśvara-Chandra Gupta who flourished in the first half of the nineteenth century. Madhūsudana and Hema-Chandra also knew its use, but they never imagined that this folk metre could ever become the medium of serious and first class poetry. It is the reforming zeal of Rabindranath which courageously removed its untouchability and having brought it out from an obscure corner of continued negligence, has given it a high place in the polished society of fine poetry. Indeed the unfailing ears of Rabindranath could not but detect the intrinsic rhythmic beauty of these metres from the very beginning and so he set himself the task, rather early in his life, of rubbing off their outer layer of primitive crudeness and thus discovered the glittering beauty of pure gold underneath. From the time of the *Kshanikā* first published in the year, 1900, Rabindranath has been experimenting with these metres in all possible ways, has given them hundreds of forms and has used them in all spheres of thought, light and serious. The result is that some of his most powerful poems have been composed in these syllabic metres which were once neglected as the medium suitable only for folk poetry.

As regards the forms they have received at the hands of Rabindranath, it has been demonstrated by him that the *svaravritta* or the syllabic group of metres is capable of yielding as many varieties including the enjambed verses of fixed and unfixed lengths (*i.e.*, the *muktaka*) as the *Yaugika* group itself. In this connection the *Palātakā* (1918), a wonderful book of narrative poems of deep and touching pathos, deserves special mention, because the whole book is composed in *svaravritta* rhythm, very often of the *muktaka* variety.

I often wonder how one man could discover all the fundamental laws which govern versification in a complex language like Bengali and at the same time apply them in practice to evolve a bewildering diversity of forms. It is nothing short of a miracle that in the course of a little over half a century which, after all, must be regarded as a very short period in the

history of a nation's literature, Bengal should, thanks to the creative genius of one single poet, succeed in building up in the domain of metrics what other nations with an array of literary men of outstanding ability, required centuries to achieve.

Rabindranath has often been compared with Kalidāsa and Shakespeare whom he certainly resembles in many respects. Kalidāsa and Shakespeare, however, could make use of a language and a system of metrics which were already in an advanced state of development, although both very considerably enriched them by their works. It fell to Rabindranath's lot to construct even the language and the metres, both of which were in a rudimentary state of evolution when he first began his literary career. A poet of rare genius he has, perhaps more than any other poet, been the architect of the vehicle of his own thoughts.

I often feel that Rabindranath might not without reason be regarded as a combination of a Newton and a Shakespeare. For, like Newton, he has discovered the fundamental laws of gravitation in a new world, the world of rhythm, and, like Shakespeare, he has by applying them in practice, built up everlasting monuments of literary beauty.

It is seldom given to a man to be as distinguished for the discovery of fundamental laws in any sphere of existence as for having put them into actual practice. Fortunately for Bengal, there has been a happy fusion in Rabindranath both of the science and the art of metrics. Like Kalidāsa, the reputed author of the *Srutabodha* as well as of the *Meghadūta*, Rabindranath is not only a poet of the highest rank but also a prosodist of equal eminence. It is not for me to attempt an assessment of the value of his poetical works. This may be left to experts of whom there is no dearth. But as an humble prosodist I cannot help observing that the light he has thrown on the basic principles of Bengali versification in his small work entitled *Chhanda*, a veritable mine of information within its limited compass, will ever remain a source of inspiration to all those who are interested in the subject.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S DRAWINGS[1]

By Henry Bidou

RABINDRANATH TAGORE says that there is no connection between his work as a poet and his work as a painter. As a poet, he has before his eyes a vision which he describes, or, as he calls it, a mental representation. He sees a landscape, a garden, or a face; he imitates, as a painter imitates, this model impressed upon his mind. His verses communicate images seen or created. On the contrary, when he becomes a painter (and this is the strangest part of the story), exactly at the point at which others begin to copy, he ceases to copy. His pictures do not represent a scheme preconceived in his mind. So far from seeing them beforehand, he actually does not know, while he is doing them, what they are going to be. So, in producing his poetry, he worked as a painter : now that he is a painter, he works like a poet. The whole of this new work is on the borderline of two sciences or two arts.

I have seen the first drawings that he made. On the manuscripts of poems written in Bengali, he had made erasures. Poets are calligraphers. These corrections took the form of horizontal crossings-out, with thin threads of white between the black lines. This delicate surface of black striped with white was enclosed by him in an outline like a cartouche. Sometimes it extended over two lines. It was then as though the cartouche had become a capital. It was finished at the top by a torus which rested on an ogee, but if the lower line of erasure extended towards the left, the general form changed again. It stretched out into a beak or a keel, and behold, a bird was flying towards the west.

Various erasures scattered over a page became so many

1 The above is a translation of extracts from an article on the subject of Rabindranath Tagore's drawings, by M. Henry Bidou, which appeared in the Paris Press, on the occasion of the exhibition of some of these drawings at the Galerie Pigalle in 1980.—*Ed.*

islands, each with its own form and volume.[1] This archipelago of reserves rising out of the waters at the caprice of inspiration, sometimes was grouped in a corner, and sometimes spread over the whole page, bound together by the slender Hindu characters which looked like the crests of waves under a steady wind. Tagore had joined up these islands of erasures, not by dead straight lines but by soft and flowing curves which seemed almost to breathe, and the stylised erasures and linking curves made between them a single arabesque with masses and disconnections, nerves and flexures, all obeying organic law.

This law held the poet's hand in its control. Far from realising the preconceived idea of a decoration, he merely aided in the birth of a line of which he knew nothing, and which was waiting to be born. This line was not foreseen by the mind. On the contrary, in the infinite number of possible figures, all that the mind could do was to recognise the particular one which was striving to appear in that particular space, and which was, so to speak, already completely traced and only needed to be made visible. Naturally the reasoning mind with the sub-division of its calculations and the experimental nature of its researches, is incapable of discovering all at once so subtle a truth, and so it was simply the hand itself animated by its own elemental spirit, the hand which has inscribed so many verses and in which rhythm is already inherent, which, without consulting the poet, produced from the immense number of possibilities, the one predestined design. I have seen several of these curves traced by Tagore across the page. Their grace, their animated suppleness, their inherent life, are unrivalled.

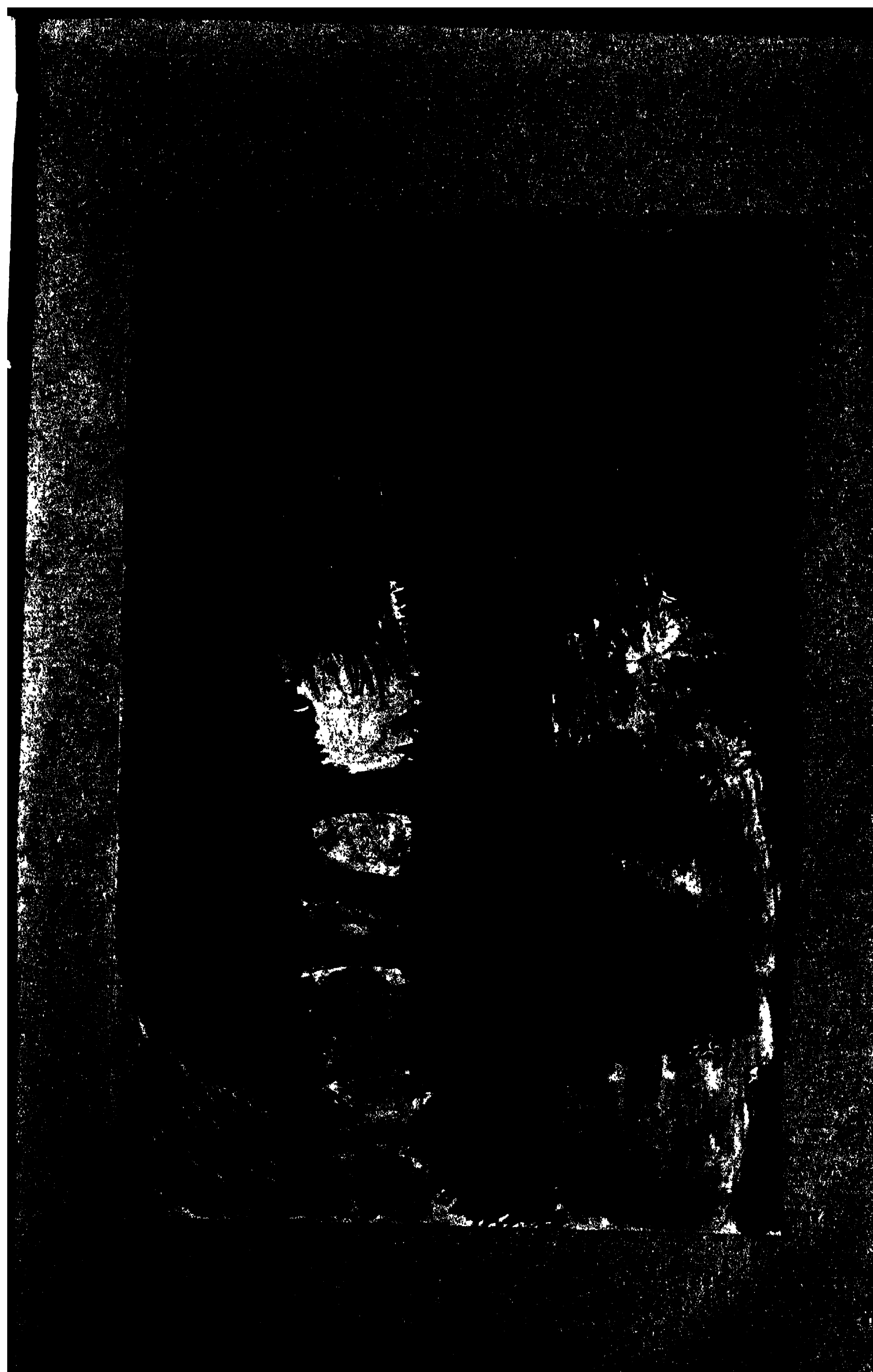
Nevertheless sometimes he makes mistakes. He himself has told me so. It is as though he had broken the stem of a flower in trying to bend it. The curve drawn amiss can only die. He abandons it sadly, conscious of having led it to its destruction. For all these shapes are like so many little souls

1 The tail-pieces used as decoration at the end of some articles in this Number are such erasures taken from one of his manuscripts.—*Ed.*

which expect their salvation from him, and which he has to lead to their fruition. It was a touching spectacle, this of the aged poet with all his glory on him, turned shepherd of arabesques and gently leading them from the limbo in which they had slept until the moment of the determination of their form : and what mysterious beings are these curves in which nature has hidden the most subtle secrets of mathematics.

One line has scarcely been drawn before another follows it, as though called into existence by it, and demanding to be created in its turn. So they begin a kind of canticle and response, and even in the singing they are modified and changed. They draw together, they draw apart, they become enriched with ornament, they blossom, they arrive eventually at having traced upon the page the outline of a vase decorated with incisions and designs and whose lines, in their movement towards and apart from one another, retain a marvellous purity. It is the exact counterpart in terms of space to a fugue in terms of time, with its theme, its response, its counter-subject and its variations. When, wearied with the work of copying in his lovely handwriting for all time a page of the "*Clavecin bien tempéré*," Bach allowed himself to dream for a moment, his pen might in just such a fashion have wandered of its own accord over the paper, tracing just such designs in play.

Rabindranath Tagore has long since abandoned this starting point of turning erasures into a design. Fate and the gods give him nowadays other starting points, but there are recognisable traces of this first manner even in his latest work, and these explain certain forms that it takes. Sometimes it is a design in layers which give to the picture the appearance of masonry ; often it is the actual lines of writing themselves ; at another time, one motive superposed upon another, all animated by horizontal movement and turned towards the left. Such a one is a double figure, a galloping steed ridden by a nude woman, who leans forward and clutches the mane of her mount. Given a word of which the sound was not pleasant, and lower down a verse

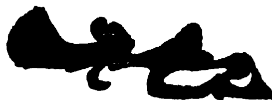


struck out, no more was needed to bring about the birth of the form which, seeking in the familiar world for external resemblance, developed into this cavalcade.

The starting point is changed, but the work is the same. There is always, to begin with, a given cell around which the work develops itself, a nucleus, as Tagore says, and from this moment onwards, the unknown laws which govern the evolution of forms direct the hand of the creator. These forms begin by having an abstract character. Little by little whether by a kind of self-produced evolution or because the influence which guides them is touched by some memory of the common world, they acquire a certain resemblance to what we call nature. They become a face. Sometimes they hesitate to choose their destiny. A very curious design shows curves lying across the page, which seemed to be shaping into an orchid, but they changed their minds, and, the petal becoming a wing and the foot a claw, a fantastic bird was born from the flower. The resemblances so created, reduced to their mathematical elements, are sometimes astonishing in their firmness and truth. At other times, they possess a pathetic strength which is very touching. The curves which form them, moving freely, re-invent every style and recall every kind of genius. One figure is such as Modigliani might have drawn, and another might be the work of Pollaiuolo, or again, if the destiny of the lines was that they should end in cloudiness, the page upon which they are traced becomes covered by a sky. Only those who have never recognised those mysterious currents of thought and feeling, the outcome of the age itself, which penetrate all souls as by osmosis, and give its direction to a whole epoch, will be surprised that this pure painting, absolutely sincere and wholly uninfluenced by our studio customs, should resemble now and then the most recent researches of the painters of the west. There can be no question of imitation, but the convergence of spirit is remarkable.

This work is not a hobby or a plaything. For the last two years, Rabindranath Tagore has been wholly occupied by this

new form of creation. The drawings which he produces with pens and inks, and which have the appearance of singularly skilful and sumptuous water-colours, take possession of him, and once begun, leave him no peace until they are finished. They are done at a sitting, and in a very short time, scarcely more than an hour, without a single mistake of the pen, as it threads the maze of intersecting curves and blank spaces. This new vocation is not so mysterious after all. A latent genius was asleep ; that is made plain by the sureness of the design, the beauty of the tones, the liveliness of every detail, the sense of ornament. For almost a lifetime, this genius has been kept in the shadows, for the highly developed faculties of the conscious mind left no room for the expression of this hidden force. One fine day it revealed itself, and the poet felt that another person was being manifested in him, but the new minister has not changed the laws of the state. In a story translated in 1929, *The Wreck*, Tagore the writer created a very wise man, named Ramesch, who carefully avoided crossing the will of destiny, and whose obedience to its orders dragged him into some most complicated adventures. Tagore the painter designs in the same way that Ramesch lived.



THE GENIUS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya

It is very difficult to dwell within short limits on the many-sided activities, the transcendent genius of Rabindranath Tagore—his poetic diction, his criticism of life, "the sad still music of humanity" which pervades his writings. Just as the Sun, "the bright effluence of a bright essence increate" rising from the east "robed in flames and amber light" travels the universe giving life and light to the living and inert world, so the genius of Rabindranath Tagore gives promethean light to the world of fancies, thoughts and ideas. Just as the Sun "at the voice of God did invest the rising world of waters dark and deep, won from the void and formless infinite" so the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore gave shape and form and made the world dance to the tune of his orphean lyre.

A great philosopher stated that the end of our life is action and not thought. Another philosopher has observed that a good thought must precede a noble action. In the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore we find a harmonious blending of both thought and action. "Poets are trumpets wishing for battle." "They are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." The poetry of Rabindranath blows the trumpet of a prophecy ; it scatters the dead thoughts as the decaying leaves are scattered by the west wind. The Bard of Santiniketan presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of a world rising from oppression and injustice. Like the great seer he has tried to set aright the world-stream's flow. There is joy in his poetry, there is life in his writings ; he preaches the doctrine of optimism and rejuvenation. The shackles of dead formalism, barrenness, lethargy, tyranny and injustice must be broken. He preaches the doctrine of harmonious blending of wisdom and action, of means and end. He is not only "the prophet of the wonder and bloom of the world" but a Messiah of hope, love and work. The establishment of Santiniketan is the embodiment of the ideal and

the establishment of Sriniketan is a proof of his practical realism. Rabindranath typifies the sublime and the practical.

It has been rightly stated that the function of a poet is to give to the ordinary the stamp of eternity, to make the ordinary "the nursling of immortality." A poet describes things "with an orient light unborrowed of the sun, that never was on sea or land—the consecration and the poet's dream."

"The form remains," says the poet, "but the function never dies." The composition and constitution of Visva-Bharati may be limited and confined. The poetry of Rabindranath may have limits and restrictions but the idea that inspires his poetry or his Visva-Bharati must live for ever and must transcend all limitations. Nothing can be a greater fallacy than to suppose that the idea is contained only within the limits, that the underlying idea of a poem is confined within the corners of the poem itself. The form is but a temporary visage which encases the idea but the idea itself like an eternal essence will live on for ever from age to age.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." It is perfectly immaterial from the point of artistic beauty whether Ramachandra was a real figure or Sita a mere halo of poetic fancy, whether Jesus Christ was a real personage or the necessary outcome of a deep devotion of an oppressed race. So long as mankind exists for truth and beauty, for deep sentiments and emotions such characters like Ramachandra or Jesus Christ will be an imperative necessity for the satisfaction of the moral and religious sentiments of an aching world.

Rabindranath has created characters which transcend all times and ages, characters which overleap all limitations. He has created ideas, divine essence, God-given ideas—which are "the master light of all our seeing, which are the fountain light of all our doing"—these splendid visions which guide our destiny as also a nation's destiny from the cradle to the grave.[1]

1 English version by Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee, M. A., Lecturer, Calcutta University, from the original Bengali.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar

RABINDRANATH TAGORE's essays and verses appeared in Bengali periodicals as early as 1875 ; his "Gandhi Maharaj" was indited only a few weeks ago. During the intervening period, extending over two or three generations, Tagore has rarely, if ever at all, allowed a year to pass without adding something fresh and vital to the heritage of Bengali literature. He was born in the rich and noble family of the Tagores on the 7th May 1861. His grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore, had been a friend and co-worker of Raja Rammohan Roy : his father, Devendranath, the *Maharshi*, had been a pillar of the Brahma Samaj movement. Rabindranath was thus heir to great traditions. He lost his mother when quite young ; and his father was not often at home. Young Rabindranath therefore lived his own life—and it was essentially a lonely life. He came in time to love loneliness, even to make a religion of it. "There are many paradoxes in the world and one of them is this, that wherever the landscape is immense, the sky unlimited, clouds intimately dense, feelings unfathomable—that is to say, where infinity is manifest—its fit companion is one solitary person." It was thus Tagore later generalized from his own apprehensions. Tagore was, of course, no misanthrope—far from it ; he loved all creations of man and God and loved to live amidst them, but the infinity of solitude charmed, chastened, and made a different man of him. Out of this mystic union of Man and Nature, great poetry was born, and born again and again.

The many-sided achievements of Tagore during the past six decades and more almost take one's breath away. Lyrics, poetic plays, plays of ideas, social plays, novels, short stories, essays in criticism, philosophical essays, autobiographical fragments, letters, addresses, educational dissertations, these have

uninterruptedly flowed from his pen. He is an actor, a producer, a musician, a painter, and a platform speaker of extraordinary power. He played a conspicuous part in the activities of Brahma Samaj ; he was a prominent figure during the "Partition of Bengal" agitation, though he did not subscribe to its wilder heresies ; he has made his Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan the rallying centre of international culture ; he has travelled the world over, raising India's stature in the process ; and the figure of the aged poet, with the flowing beard and immaculate white clothes, has now become a visible symbol of India's antiquity, her reserves of poetry and her living philosophy.

During the earlier half of his career, the storm of controversy broke now and then over him, and threatened to engulf him. However, by the time he was fifty years old Bengal as one man was prepared to honour him. The meeting on January 28, 1912, at the Calcutta Town Hall was the homage paid by the Bengalees as a whole to their Poet Laureate. During his subsequent English tour, some of his English renderings from the original Bengali, while still in manuscript, elicited the unqualified appreciation of people like W. B. Yeats, Rothenstein, May Sinclair, Professor Bradley, Nevinson and others. *Gitānjali* was published in England, and it took the English world by storm. Presently, in 1913, Rabindranath was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

One should carefully guard against over-estimating the importance of the Nobel award. In the late Mr. Nagendranath Gupta's words, "For Rabindranath the Nobel Prize has served as an introduction to the west. . . for the rest the Nobel Prize has been of no more use to him than his cast off knighthood." The award, and the lionising of the poet that it led to, really depressed him. He was utterly sincere when he remarked : "I shall never get any peace again. I shall be worried with appeals, all kinds of people will be writing to me. My heart sank when I saw those people at Bombay and realized that they were going to make a public show of me there." However,

this "introduction to the west" was no negligible matter. It put him—and through him, *modern* India—on the map of world literature. Indians realized that at last the West was paying homage to the East ; they accordingly eagerly shared the joy and hoped to discover in it inspiration for creative work in the future. "A poet's mission is to attract the voice which is yet inaudible in the air ; to inspire faith in the dream which is unfulfilled ; to bring the earliest tidings of the unborn flower to a sceptic world." It was thus Tagore's work gave a standing and a status to the Indian renaissance, making it hope that the fulfilment of its visions is now only a matter of time.

Tagore's vitality and fecundity are truly astonishing. There are nearly two hundred items in the bibliography of his Bengali writings. He seems to have written nearly two thousand songs. His plays are as numerous as they are varied. Even his English translations constitute a respectable bulk. Collections like *Gitānjali*, *The Gardener*, and *The Crescent Moon* have been put into their English garb by Tagore himself. In plays like *Chitra*, he seems to have altered the original in many places. Notwithstanding all this ceaseless activity, his work is not unequal in the sense Wordsworth's work is unequal. Rabindranath's lyrical poetry seems to suffer, when taken in mass, from a sort of sameness but not from flatness or grotesqueness. When collections of his poems appeared one by one, each was a revelation, and was received with a chorus of applause. English and American critics found them "of supreme beauty", "of trance-like beauty" ; they thought that "to begin chanting these lyrics aloud is to pass majestically into a realm of spiritual ecstasy" ; they wondered if the rhythm of the lyrics was not comparable to that of the *Song of Songs*. In course of time, as the bulk seemed to increase, and especially when the omnibus *Collected Poems and Plays* was published, the magic seemed to fade away, and the critics sang a different tune : "much of Tagore's writing is only a kind of mellifluous musing or is even lost, to quote his own words, 'in the endless mist of vague sweetness' . . . even his

expression of ecstasy is apt to be diffuse and this diffuseness is the more obvious when we have his work as here in bulk."

An antidote to this feeling would be to read Rabindranath's longer poems which have, unfortunately, not reached as many people as have his shorter song-offerings and fluent musings. One of his great poems is "Sea Waves", written to commemorate the wreck of a pilgrim ship carrying nearly one thousand passengers to Puri in 1887. The occasion and the moving poem it called forth remind one of Gerard Hopkins's *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. Even in translation the surge and the roar, "the burl of the fountains of air", the "buck and the flood of the wave", are reproduced ; the Storm, the ogress shouting "Give ! give ! give !", is fearfully, unforgettably, visualized. In "The Child" there is an impressionistic description of the pilgrimage of men and women of all kinds to the hypothetical shrine of fulfilment. Ibsen's Brand is reincarnated in this poem. Men from the valley of the Nile, the banks of the Ganges, from Tibet and the "dense dark tangle of savage wildernesses", all gather in one place and start on their journey ; the trials are unendurable to everyone except the Man of Faith ; he is denounced by his erstwhile followers as a false prophet. None the less they reach their journey's end ; the child is discovered ;

> They kneel down,—the king and the beggar, the saint
> and the sinner,
> the wise and the fool,—and cry :
> "Victory to man, the new-born, the ever-living."

And of Rabindranath's "Farewell to Heaven", "Urvasi", "Ahalya", "The Stream of Being" and "The Tajmahal", which are among the most sustained flights of his muse, it is difficult to speak with moderation. They seem to be perfect of their kind, implicating universes of thought and feeling ; they seem to be rough approximations to the traditional "music of the spheres"—so inwrought are they "in forms that luxuriate into arabesque, in colours that shimmer into iridescence, in speech that kindles into imagery."

And the crowning wonder of all seems to be "Urvasi",—a bursting scream of adoration at the sight of Ideal Beauty, the enchantress of Life and Love :

> In the assembly of the Gods, when thou dancest in ecstasy of joy,
> O swaying wave, Urvasi,
> The companies of billows in mid-ocean swell and dance, beat on beat ;
> In the crests of the corn the skirts of Earth tremble ;
> From thy necklace stars fall off in the sky ;
> Suddenly in the breast of man the heart forgets itself,
> The blood dances !
> Suddenly in the horizon thy zone bursts,—
> Ah, wild in abandon !

Rightly Dr. Edward Thompson finds in this poem " a meeting of East and West indeed, a glorious tangle of Indian mythology, modern science, legends and European romance." Nor is Mr. Nagendranath Gupta off the mark when he affirms that the poem "scintillates and glitters like the Kohinoor in the poet's Golconda of flawless jewels."

As a novelist, Tagore's fame rests on *Gora* and *The Home and the World*. The earlier novel, *The Wreck*, interesting as it is, is an unsatisfactory work. Ramesh is a Bengali edition of Oblomov ; he is scarcely convincing. And the story is full of improbabilities and coincidences that leave a distaste in the end. *The Home and the World* adopts the technique followed, among others, by Browning in his *Ring and the Book* and Wilkie Collins in his *Woman in the White*. The three chief characters, Nikhil, his wife Bimala, and their friend, Sandip, tell their own stories in the first person. Nikhil is a curious amalgam of Prince Muishkin and Stavrogin. His goodness is mistaken for weakness by others ; his sense of justice is denounced as treachery to the national cause. The clap-trap that passes for patriotism deeply pains him.

> What I really feel is this, that those who cannot find food for their enthusiasm in a knowledge of their country as it is, or those who

> cannot love men just because they are men—who needs must shout and deify their country in order to keep up their excitement,—these love excitement more than their country.

There is no doubt Nikhil is a partial projection of Tagore himself.

The Home and the World was greeted indifferently on account of its political implications. But *Gora* was a favourite from the beginning with Tagore's admirers. Its hero, Gourmohan, is the son of an English lady brought up in a Hindu household since the very day of his birth. He is presented to us therefore as a fusion of the best that the West and the East can boast of. Gora, albeit he is a symbol, is well realized in flesh and blood.

As a short story writer, again, Tagore has some notable triumphs to his credit. *Hungry Stones*, *Mashi*, and similar collections bespeak the range of his art. These are not stories really, but prose lyrics in fiction. The emotional background is the main thing ; the plot spins itself out effortlessly, inevitably almost. Tagore plumbs the depths of the human heart, and he has an uncanny understanding of women, their superficial wiles and their reserves of devotion and sacrifice. Asha and Minnie and Kusum and Souravi and Bindhya Bhashini are so many variations on the same theme of womanhood that serves Man, and serving fulfills its destiny. Likewise, "being rooted and grounded in the love of all the loveliness of earth", Tagore could transmit to his readers something of this love, something of this naked kinship with Nature and "dear and dogged man". His novels and short stories are thus the composite testament of a seer's ripe wisdom ; they suggest a way of life, but more through artistic implication than propagandist iteration.

There is not space here to speak in detail of Tagore's dramas. Some of them, *Chitra* and *Sacrifice*, *King and Queen* and *Post Office*, have proved very popular in their English garbs. Tagore has been writing plays during almost every period of his career. Their range is very wide ; some are social studies, reminding one of Ibsen ; some are tragedies, taking our minds

back to Elizabethan tragedy ; some are soaked in symbolism, reminding one of Maeterlinck's *Pelleas and Melisande* or Hauptmann's *Hannele* ; there are others still, seemingly fragile and slight, that shift the action to the theatre of the soul. A multitude of characters people these plays—Ila, Queen Sumitra, Raghupati, Aparna, Chitra and Arjuna, Mālini, Karna and Kunti, Sati, the King of the Dark Chamber. Many of the plays no doubt seem to suffer from a thinness of content, a poverty of action, when merely read. But we have it on good authority that when they are *seen*—and these plays, one and all of them, are meant to be seen—on the stage, they "are a delight which never falters from the first word to the last." Only on the stage the fluid visions crystallize, the words acquire a spiral of meaning, and the music and the pageantry coalesce into a nobler synthesis.

Rabindranath Tagore is different things to different men. Some are mainly attracted by *Sādhanā* and *The Religion of Man* ; some make a habit of dipping into *Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore*, culled and edited by Andrews ; some read his books on Nationalism and Personality, his letters and his addresses ; some like his poems short, others regret that he has written no epic ; some read *The Kabuliwallah* again and again with tears in their eyes ; some speculate on his philosophy and discourse on his symbolism. Tagore's genius has shot out in many directions, dazzling and giving light : but we are too near to him to be able to "place" him. Judged by any standards whatsoever, Tagore's poetic achievements compel recognition ; he is not of India alone, but the world's. He has given us his gifts lavishly, and a life-time of reverent study is not enough to take in all that he has to give. What, then, is the great fact of Rabindranath's achievement ? He is a messenger of an immense future to come ; "he has knocked at our gate and all the bars have given way. Our doors have burst open." It only remains for us to gather the harvest while we may.

THE POLITICAL IDEALS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By Sachin Sen

Our politics has neither grammar nor syntax ; it is full of oxymorons. Being a subject nation, we generally exhaust ourselves in condemnation of foreign rule, and those who are loud in such condemnation receive the loudest applause. In the ultimate analysis, our political movement is an invitation to favours from our foreign rulers. Rabindranath admits that he has no enthusiasm for such political movement. He has faith in the dignity of human relationship, so he disdains the insolence of might ; he knows that the mission of civilisation is to bring unity among people and establish peace and harmony, so he rejects the poisonous fumes of greed and hatred corroding the spirit of Man. Tagore is not an anarchist, but an individualist who believes that the function of the State is to maintain the conditions necessary to the best life, and that the function of society is to promote the good life and to help the expression of those moral and spiritual aspirations of man which belong to his higher nature. As an individualist, he refuses to "associate truth and justice and right automatically with the possession of physical power". People who will remain passive recipients of orders to whose moral quality they are indifferent will cease to be moral beings, as he sincerely believes that to abdicate the duty of moral judgment is to sell oneself into slavery and to be incapable of creative achievement. But he has profound faith in social co-operation and is not indifferent to limiting one's aggressiveness in avoiding collisions with fellow-creatures. Tagore's political ideals spring from this idealist theory of the State and dynamic view of social co-operation owning obedience not to any specific organ of coercion but to the moral instincts of Man. The history of humanity, it can be shown, is a protest

স্বদেশ

বিধির বাঁধন কাটবে তুমি
এমন শক্তিমান!
তুমি কি এমন শক্তিমান!
আমাদের ভাঙাগড়া তোমার হাতে
এমন অভিমান
তোমাদের এমনি অভিমান!
চিরদিন টানবে পিছে
চিরদিন রাখবে নীচে,
এত বল নাইরে তোমার
সবে না সেই টান।
শাসনে যতই ঘেরো
আছে বল দুর্বলেরো,
হওনা যতই বড়
আছেন ভগবান
আমাদের শক্তি মেরে
তোরাও বাঁচবি নেরে,
বোঝা তোর ভারি হলেই
ডুববে তরীখান!

শিলাইদহ
২২শে
ভাদ্র
১৩১২

FACSIMILE OF THE POET'S HANDWRITING

National Song written during the Anti Partition Movement

against the doctrine that justice is the will of the stronger and that moral obligation is less compelling because it may end in failure.

With Hegel, the stress is laid on the achievement of actual unity under the State and self-realisation of man as a member of the State. The recognition of private and group interest of a citizen is subordinated to his devotion to the State as "embodiment of the Universal Idea". With Rabindranath, the emphasis is on evolving a social unity, within which all the different peoples can be held together, "while fully enjoying the freedom of maintaining their own differences." The deification of the State is absent, as the end to be sought is the spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being, so that "men can develop ideals of life in co-operation with one another." In Tagore's doctrine of social classes, as with Hegel, there is no room for class struggle, and each class gets a definition in terms of the collective service to the community as a whole. Hegel wanted the unifying influence of the State; Tagore believes in the harmonising strength of social instincts. According to Rabindranath, the ideals that strove to take form in India's social institutions had two objects : one was to regulate our passions and appetites for the harmonious development of man, and the other was to help him to cultivate disinterested love for his fellow-creatures. These social ideals are creative ; they do not stimulate like wine and lead to abnormality ; they help the natural regulation of human relationships. The social instincts which impose restrictions upon greed and hatred, as emphasised by Tagore, cannot but lead to the growth of social conscience which is involved in the modern concept of the social service State. The motive power in Tagore's societarian ideals is service and sacrifice—service to fellow-citizens and sacrifice of one's exclusiveness. This corresponds to the ideals inculcated by the modern social service State.

Believing as he does in the adjustment of differences and regulation of human aggressiveness, Tagore has welcomed the

spirit of the West but disdained the Nation of the West. He interpreted "nation" in the sense that it was the political and economic union of a people for a mechanical purpose ; its basis was the spirit of conflict and conquest and not social co-operation. Tagore reckons "Nationalism" as a great menace and believes that the Western Nation is acting like "a dam to check the free flow of Western civilisation into the country of the No-Nation." The Western civilisation is the civilisation of power, and therefore it is exclusive ; it is naturally unwilling to open its sources of power to those whom it has selected for its purposes of exploitation. This exploitation of India by England is fierceful for two-fold reason : (1) the Government of Britain is well-organised ; nationalism forges its iron chains of organisation which are the most relentless and unbreakable that have ever been manufactured in the whole history of man. (2) Before the British rule commenced, India had known foreign invaders and foreign domination. She had to deal with Kings, with human races ; she loved and hated them as occasion arose. But with the British conquest dated an era of foreign rule, not by an alien ruler but by an alien nation. India began to be exploited for the first time by a foreign nation for a foreign nation. She could supply the needs and satisfy the greed of rulers and invaders, but it was impossible to protect herself from decay now that there was organised exploitation by an organised nation for satisfying the needs of a distant foreign nation. This exhausted India and made her prostrate ; this accelerated the break-up of her social ideals, helped the growth of new classes in the Indian soil forming the link in the chain of British exploitation, and introduced "the politics of begging". It was in this background that Tagore's political ideals took form and shape. His political philosophy was grounded on the following basic considerations :

(1) It was Tagore's conviction that what India needed was constructive work coming from within herself. In this work the people must take all risks and go on doing their duties.

They must show their power to suffer for truth. He found little difference between a moderate, begging for favour with folded hands, and an extremist asking for favour with angry eyes. Tagore knows that where we have nothing to show, we have only to beg. To continue the existence as "the eternal rag-picker at the other people's dustbins" is the greatest shame of a country. Tagore believes :

> Prisoner, tell me, who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain.
> It was I, said the prisoner, who forged this chain very carefully.

(2) Tagore's "Swadeshi Samaj" (State within State) was a manifesto of his belief that India's problems are essentially social, and that the problems had to be approached through social co-operation. His scheme envisaged the organisation of the forces and resources of the country without any reference to the foreign bureaucratic administration. Tagore preached the duty of eschewing all voluntary association with official activities and sought to build up a parallel Government. His scheme amounted to a boycott of the British administration and British goods. He did not, however, advise the "seizure of power" as he had no faith in organising life on the passions of greed and hatred through the coercive machinery of the State ; he wanted to make society supreme and to promote social co-operation as the fundamental purpose of his scheme.

(3) Tagore emphasises again and again that man must grow to his full height by inculcating moral powers within. He points out that there should be no distrust of foreign culture, but that Indians must unfold their own culture. He reproached his countrymen for being merely hangers-on of European culture forsaking the rich granary of their own past. In his synthesis, he stood for a well-balanced life. Tagore knows full well that Britishers can only respect us when we are strong and that the weak must suffer at the hands of the powerful. Accordingly, he asks us to remember that "whatever weakness we cherish in our society will become the source of danger in politics. The same inertia which leads us to our idolatry of dead forms in social

institutions will create in our politics prison-houses with immovable walls." This is why Tagore cautions his countrymen against building "a political miracle of freedom upon the quicksand of social slavery." He replies to the critics that by pushing political freedom amidst the dung-heap of social weaknesses, we will only "dam up the true course of our own historical stream." Those who have got their political freedom are not necessarily free, they are merely powerful. Under cover of political freedom, huge organisations of slavery are built up and continued. There is no reason to be enamoured of such political power.

When Tagore preached the dangers of aggressive Nationalism of the West and proclaimed social co-operation through regulation of the lower passions of greed and hatred, he was criticised as a colourless internationalist and an empty idealist who could earn applause but not adherents. His countrymen, drunk as they were with the political philosophies of the West, hesitated to accord support to his political teachings, and the Westerners, intoxicated with organised power, failed likewise to appreciate the accent and idiom of Tagore. It is extremely interesting to the students of political thought that aggressive nationalism, founded on sovereign state-hood, is receiving strong criticism from the modern political thinkers of the West. It is now admitted that there are state servitudes—financial, judicial, administrative—which are not derogatory to statehood. Non-sovereign statehood does no violence to reality, and the conception of the world-community, the "civitas maxima," is not an idle and an empty dream. Political thinkers of today admit that nationalism breeds imperialism, and the termination of the possibility of aggression in the future by any nation-state involves the abolition of sovereignty. It is being increasingly felt that "the boundaries between nation-states cannot be permitted to interfere with the total well-being of the civitas maxima". This modern approach to the world problems of discontent and war is, in a sense, in line with Tagore's preaching in his

"Nationalism" wherein he did not fail to condemn that "the Nation, with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches, and the literary mock thunders of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that the Nation is the greatest evil for the Nation, that all its precautions are against it, and any new birth of its fellow in the world is always followed in its mind by the dread of a new peril." The West forgot that "man in his fulness is not powerful, but perfect," and that the present crisis in the world civilisation was due to the grouping of a number of sovereign nation-states distrusting one another. Tagore, therefore, cherished the hope that when the morning would come for cleansing the blood-stained steps of the Nation along the high-road of humanity, India who had never had a real sense of "Nationalism" would be "called upon to bring her own vessel of sacred water to sweeten the history of man into purity" and "make the trampled dust of the century blessed with fruitfulness." Tagore counselled patience and observed :

> Let us patiently bear our present insult and realise that these fireworks have splendour but not permanence, because of the extreme explosiveness which is the cause of their power, and also of their exhaustion.

Tagore's political teachings were conditioned by the historical peculiarities of India and by the great ideal that Man is not a mere food-seeking apparatus but has a great ideal to nurse and a truth to follow. He was severe in his condemnation whenever and wherever Man had strayed away from his higher ideals. Civilisation, Tagore believes, should take its firm stand upon the basis of co-operation ; whenever Man has failed to co-operate, he has been defeated. "Whatever is richest in man's life comes from this mutual co-operation." This is the keynote of his political philosophy.

To understand and appreciate the political teachings of Rabindranath, it is necessary to know that there were two competing and conflicting ideological currents in Bengal in the nineteenth

century. Raja Rammohan Roy initiated an era of liberalism and proclaimed that life was a continual process of synthesis. There was another conservative current losing its way in the stagnant pool of orthodox Hinduism. Tagore was the lineal descendant of Raja Rammohan in the fundamental approach to the problems of the age. His was the philosophy that "growth is the movement of a whole towards a yet fuller wholeness". The impetuous onrush of Western civilisation flooded Bengal in the nineteenth century ; the rule of Bengal by a commercial corporation like the East India Company even in the eighteenth century was, in fact, a rule by the British Parliament, and it was thoroughly consolidated by Bengal's men and money. Notwithstanding the suicidal effects of foreign rule, foreign culture, and foreign enterprise, Tagore did and could carve out his own path through a continual process of synthesis. With him the governing doctrine was that "truth consists not in facts but in harmony of facts". He, therefore, stood for the vindication of Man ; the hindrances thereto were to be eradicated. The profiteer's bushel, the foreign exploitation, the soulless character of the British administration, the vulgarisation of man's higher nature, aggressive nationalism in scorn of the welfare of fellow-creatures, the blind and insensate patriotism choking the springs of human civilisation—all these which hide the light of truth are severely criticised by Rabindranath. His political ideals were influenced by the principles of humanism. Tagore is not a professional politician, but he has been undoubtedly the greatest political force in fashioning modern Bengal. He wants freedom for his countrymen from fear, shaped by their own distorted dreams, freedom from the burden of ages which "blind their eyes to the beckoning call of future", freedom from the insult of dwelling in doll's world "where movements are started through brainless wires", and freedom from the anarchy of a destiny "whose sails are weakly yielded to blind uncertain winds".

THE TOILERS*

ADRIFT on the lazy tide of time
sailing to the empty space
I had a vision of phantom shapes.
Processions of people passed and repassed
trampling their way
in a victorious march.
The Pathans with their imperial greed
—their steeds raising clouds of dust,
and after them the Mughals
—their crescent banners fluttering high
they came and they left
and far as I look in the empty space
I find no trace of them.

Since that time
many a sun did rise
and many a sun did set.
Then came the mighty English bands
racing on iron-roads
—fiery with their pride of power.
They too will vanish,
their far-flung net round the world
will be swept away
by the tide of time,
and not the faintest trace
will they leave behind them
on this vast and empty space.

The vision fades. . . .

* Translation by Kshitish Roy of one of Rabindranath's latest poems (*Arogya*, 1941).—*Ed.*

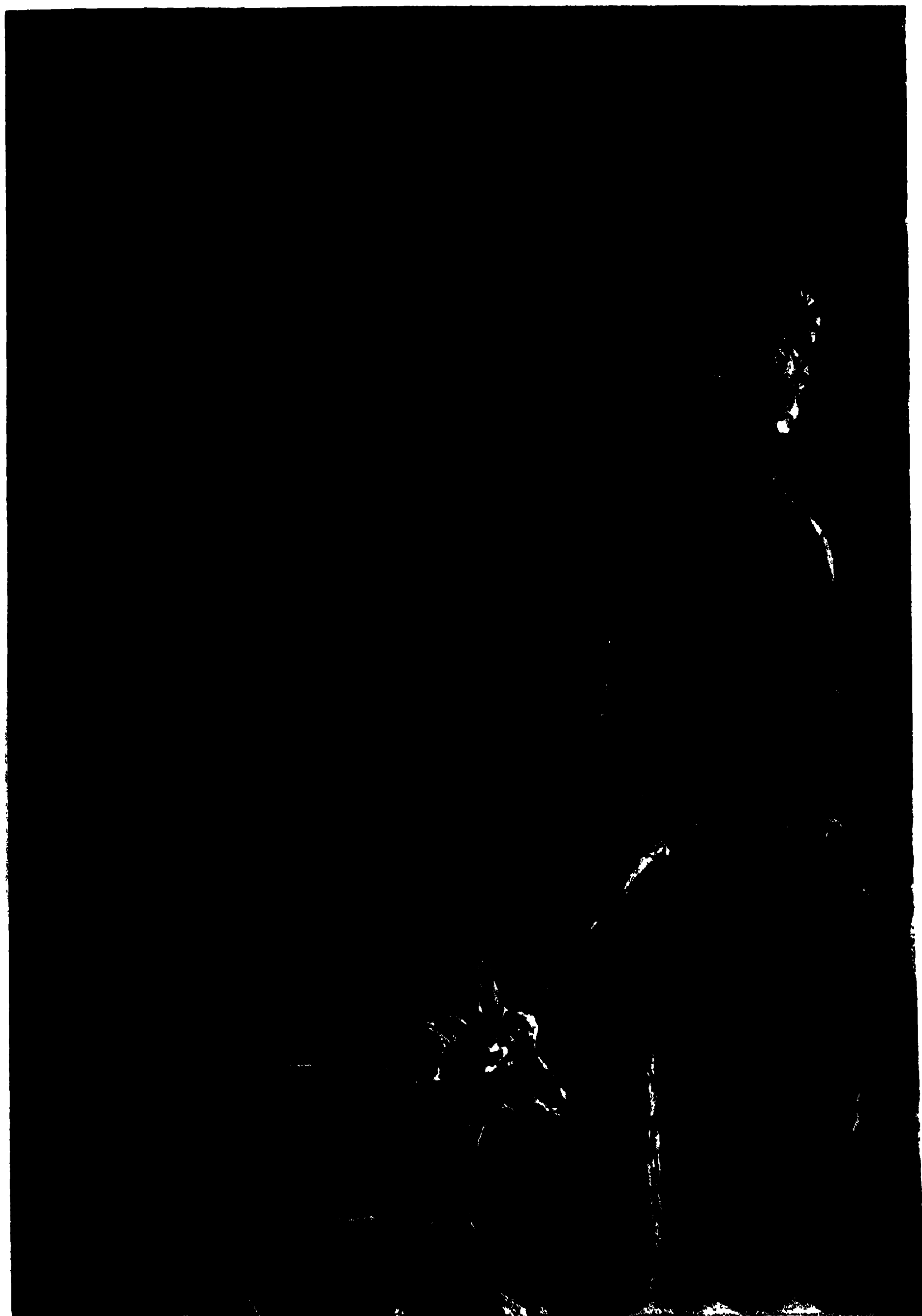
As I look around this dear old earth
I see the vast wave of common mass
traversing by diverse ways
the endless track from life to death,
urged on by common human needs
from times immemorial.
It is they that row
and they that sit at the helm.
It is they that sow the seeds
and they that toil at the harvest.
They remain the same through ages
—the toilers.

The sceptres snap,
the war-drums beat no more,
columns of victory
stand in stupid silence,
bloodshot eyes and bloodstained hands
hide in history's pages.
But they toil on
at home and abroad,
by the sea and by the rivers,
here and there and everywhere.

Their million voices mingle in a song,
their grief and joy of everyday
harmonise in a mighty hymn to Life.

Empires have passed away
and on their ashes and ruins
they ply their daily round
—the toilers.

Rabindranath Tagore



By Rabindranath Tagore

THE FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY OF RABINDRANATH[1]

By S. N. Dasgupta

It is difficult to take the first start with Rabindranath. It is like an ocean where one has lost his compass. The details of the first period of his life when the juvenile and yet precocious mind of Rabindranath was fighting with his own environment and where the environment was leaving its stamp on him, it is difficult to discover. From all we know it seems that he was not much in touch with his great father, with whom his relation was more of awe and reverence than of intimacy. From the character of Maharṣi Devendranath, as reported by Rabindranath himself in his *Jivan Smriti* (My Reminiscences) it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the family of Rabindranath was surcharged with a sort of religious outlook that the Maharṣi possessed. But Rabindranath's mind was virile and passionate, ambitious and imaginative, incipiently conscious of his great powers and unwilling to accept any defeat ; but above all endowed with an inner capacity for feeling deeply and intensely and a psychopathic temperament superlatively sensitive and yet duly regulated by rationalism, a mind which could easily reflect within itself the yearning of the time's spirit.

Freedom and individuality characterised the mental background of Rabindranath. His early sojourn to Europe gave him an opportunity of freeing his mind by which he could enjoy experiences of an entirely different dimension from what he would have been hemmed in, if it had been his lot to stay in Bengal all along—a new capacity of transcending the limits of the monotonous existence of Bengali life of those days. He was a musician

1 We regret that the exigencies of space at our disposal have compelled us to curtail the length of this article which in its original form gave a much fuller exposition of the subject.—*Ed.*

by gift and even in his early age of adolescence he could feel the pulsations of musical throbbings in his heart as spontaneously as a cuckoo or a nightingale. Yet he was more than a cuckoo or a nightingale in this that he could spell the message of the music as distinguished from the message of the words. When he tried to learn in Europe the ordinary European music and the Irish melodies he could distinguish in them the tendency of the new age to unburden its passions in a manner entirely different from what he was familiar with in Indian music. The mark of his early individuality could be felt when he charged Indian songs with European tunes and music, a process the suggestion of which must have been deepened by the musical experiments of his brother Jyotirindranath Tagore.

According to his own confession, his *Vālmiki Pratibhā* was the first attempt to express his soul in terms of this newly coined music where the literary expression sank far away in the penumbra of the torch of music. His mind at this time was boiling with emotions and infinity of subjectivity that could ideally transcend all obstacles in the very depth of the subjective experience. His *Bhagna Hriday* which he started writing in England was an illustration of this. The poet was at that time only eighteen and had not yet emerged from the twilight of dawn, when the light of the morning sun has not cleared away the misty haze of the darkness, when we live in an unreal world, which superimposes itself upon the real and when fancy has a greater charm than reality. The pleasure and pain of this life is like the pleasure and pain of a highly-spun dream, when the mind refuses to compare and attest one's feelings with reality and the feelings of one's own mind with the fancies that one weaves : the world of a magician appears as the ultimate reality.

From the age of fifteen or sixteen to twenty-two or twenty-three the poet passed through such a stage of emotional subjectivity that the exaggerated forms of emotion and fancy lived and moved about without contradiction and were more real than any real thing ; the various functions of the mind and the

various orders of experience were not differentiated at this stage; it was like the early age of the earth, when water and land were in a state of formation and differentiation, of rising lands and submerged continents, of shadows and shapes that are mutually unfamiliar to one another, when the inner powers of man crowd together for liberation and manifestation and in their very crowding baffle their own purposes. Nothing is impossible at this stage, for the bondage and limitation of the reality, of the order that is inexorable, of obstacles that are impassable, are unknown. The poet himself compares it with the state of a teething child who feels that he can break everything under his teeth. The onrush and conflict of these inner powers can never realise their end, until they are differentiated and strengthened and until the consciousness grows of the objective world of reality through which the passions are to manifest themselves.

Life in Bengal is as a rule as uneventful, as unvariegated as a little stream, hemmed in between the high banks of the village, gliding slowly towards the sea. Its load of water is little, its mud is deep and its meandering course arrests its rapidity, but when the flood of the sea rushes at the mouth the narrow river-bed can hardly accommodate the devastating volume of water which breaks the banks and inundates the peaceful villages. So it was in Bengal which was tame and calm under the oppressive bonds of social and religious repressions, family conventions and customs and relations of superiority and inferiority. The large shipment of foreign literature bombarded against its weak walls and tore open the old shackles and fire was lit up in thatched houses of bamboo groves where doves had built their nests. It is for this reason also that, while on the one hand the mass of Bengali upper-class men lay sleeping, spending their time in luxurious ease and unthinking dogmatism, strongly fettered in the meshes of the superstitious cults and customs, while the old learning had, except among a few, sunk in the mud almost beyond hope of recovery and when even the names of the great philosophical and literary

works of the past were almost forgotten, there arose on the other hand a band of young men, who had taken to English studies and had been stirred up to mad intoxication by the Western ideals of thought. It was only a few persons like Raja Rammohan Roy and Maharṣi Devendranath Tagore who could assimilate the West without being thrown off their feet, who had a solid foundation in Indian culture and who could on that basis try to build a structure after the Western pattern, modified according to the Eastern need. But a large majority of others, though often intellectually gifted, became mere enthusiasts and iconoclasts in thought. There were those who attacked the current traditional religion, not because they had a greater faith and a greater and a more refreshing insight into the deeper problems of life but because they enjoyed tearing asunder the faiths and convictions of others. Like a child who had picked up a sword they would go about testing the edge of their steel on every innocent plant and shrub that fell in their way.

Born in such an age Rabindranath in his first attempts lived in a world of passions which were a mere resonance of his young blood, stimulated by reading Western poetry and bent upon giving expression to them in the juvenile period of his composition. A flame of revolution was lit up in his heart and he gave vent to his poetic instincts in making his language a vehicle of this fanciful, illusory fire, this pseudo-passion, which was not the sacrificial fire at the altar of human experience and wisdom but a consuming fire that burns and wrecks the nerve. But a true son of the modern spirit as he was, he carried with him the conviction of a growing individuality which consciously trusted in the possible exploits of his own adventure, rather than link himself to the tail of others to seek refuge and protection under the wings of the old tradition. He had a consciousness of the truth of the experiences of his own heart even when these experiences were but mere ebullitions of emotion, mere whirlpools, which revolved round and round themselves and could be lived through as a mere internal welling-up and a purely subjective

excitement. The poet himself in his own Reminiscences refers to an old poem of his, in which he says : "My heart is my own, I have not sold it to anybody ; if it is broken and lost, be it as it may. My heart is my own."[1] And, alluding to it further, says that there was no reality which could break his heart. It was a fancied breaking of the heart, which became the subject of enjoyment in poetry. In his *Vālmiki Pratibhā* and *Māyār Khelā*, he had already begun his experiments in adapting English tunes to Bengali words and was feeling elated at the discovery of a new composition. He was thus making headway through new fields and was stimulated with the spirit of literary adventure.

The poems of his *Sandhyā Sangīt* are particularly memorable as the first adventure of the poet, when he was becoming slowly conscious of his powers. In form and matter the poems of *Sandhyā Sangīt* may not be of a high order but they were the harbinger of the morning light when the birds do not leave their nests for the open sky on their unfurled wings, but when they chirp within and feel the urge of their wings for rushing outside. There is a pensive tone in many of the poems which reveals to us the fact that the poet was becoming conscious at this time of his great destiny and he was fluttering within himself as to how he may escape the walls of his own limitations, like a bird that grows its wings within a cage, and feels in the strength of its wings its power of soaring high in the sky, but being unable to do so, pecks at the bars in sad disappointment, or like a volume of water that rushes from a mountain spring and whirls round the cavity of the rocks unable to break through the stony barrier.

Shortly after the writing of *Sandhyā Sangīt*, a new revelation of his inner consciousness dawned on the poet. In describing the dawning of this revelation the poet says that one day as he was walking on the roof of his house and the shadowy evening was enriched with the parting rays of the sun, it appeared

1 Translations of the Poet's original Bengali used in this article are done by the writer himself.—*Ed.*

to him that the world had become bathed all at once in a new beauty. He pondered over it and discovered that the cause of this new appearance was not merely the beautiful rays of the sun and the tender evening, but a new spiritual fact. He felt that the evening was not so much in the objective world as over himself, covering his own egotism and his own vanity. So long as he carried his own egotism with himself, the world could not appear in its true light ; now leaving the self aside he could look upon the world, beautiful and joyous in its true perspective. Immediately following this he describes another experience of his when he was standing one morning in the verandah of his house and looking at the gardens at a distance, from behind the foliage of which the sun was slowly peeping out. It appeared to him as if a black veil was withdrawn from his eyes and he felt as if the world was floating everywhere in joy and beauty. The pensiveness that had penetrated into the crevices of his soul vanished in a moment, and the light of the world poured into his eyes. It was the day on which he wrote his "Nirjharer Svapna-bhanga"[1] and was filled with a joy in which the whole world appeared dear to him. It was as if he had had a vision of God in his poetic inspiration and intuition. The effect of this enlightenment was immense, and it seems to have determined a very great part of his life and character and his literary enterprise. It was like a ray that penetrated through the outer covering of men and things and made their inner being visible to him. Everyone that passed in the street, from the richest to the poorest, appeared to him to be wonderful, as if they were but waves upon a dancing universe. It was a vision of things, seen through the inner consciousness, not with the eyes. Even the trifling episode, the most trivial occurrence of young men laughing in the street appeared to him like the foam from a deep sea of joy, that rocked in the cradle of the Universe. They did not appear to him as individual events, but as parts of the whole. He could imagine in one moment all the pulsations of activity throughout

1 *lit.* The Fountain Awakened from its Dream.

the world bubbling in a dance of joy and beauty, which was the essence of the world we live in ; the cow grazing in the field by another cow, the mother carrying the child, friends laughing with friends appeared to him not as trivial episodes, not as the commonplaces of everyday life but as whistling through them the echoes of a great infinity. He expressed this idea in a couplet :

> The doors of my heart have been suddenly opened,
> The world has crowded in with embracing hands.

It was not a mere poetic fantasy but was the expression of a deep feeling, which the poet could but feebly voice. This delight and joy was not a mere joy of external natural scenery ; and the poet tells us that when immediately after this he went to the Himalayas, the grandeur and splendour of that royal mountain could hardly improve the tone : it was an opening of the veil of his heart, a true enlightenment.

It was from here, I suppose, that the poet began to feel real experience of an infinity of a subjective enlightenment, the plenitude of a felt-whole, the limitless surplus within us that could not be contained within the meshes of our thought, and must express itself through the finite conjunction of words and phrases, their arrangement and order, their rhyme and jingle. The poet had written a poem at this time called the Echo (*Pratiddhvani*) and his friends failed to see any meaning in it and the poet himself failed as well. It was the echo of a yearning ; and has yearning a meaning ? So long as the world was looked at in a piecemeal fashion, the parts could be joined in intellectual schematism, but now the light within had transformed the "without" into a whole of experience, a feeling that from some deep cavern of the heart streams of melodious tunes had flowed into the valley of time and space, and whence they returned back into the heart as an echo.

While Devendranath's contact with nature was joyous and majestic and though he loved nature in his own manner, the true value of nature with him was the revelation of a greater

majesty of God whom the nature indicated as its creator and sustainer. Through every drop of sap that pervaded a tree he perceived the message of God. But Rabindranath in those days did not concern himself much about God. His was a passionate soul which, often vainly fluttering in deep subjective immediacy, one day found its escape when he realised that the true yearning that he felt so deeply consisted in the fact that his inner spirit, which was infinity in itself, poured out into the objective world and was reflected from there back to his heart, and it was this reflection that was a source of joy and beauty and it was this stream returning home into his soul that constituted the internal yearning that he felt. The infinite manifested itself in the finite and through the finite forms returned back into the infinite. As he says, this discovery was his own and it was the passion of this discovery that was a true revelation for him.

We find here a ring of Hegel's Philosophy, of the spirit expressing itself in sensuous terms and coming back to itself through a new transfiguration which was for Hegel the definition of art. The philosophy of Hegel had at this time spread its influence in England not only on the philosophers like Bradley, Caird, Stirling and others but also on poets and writers like Coleridge and Carlyle. It is not unlikely that the poet might have caught the suggestion somewhere, and in and through his revelation of that particular morning's joy, the truth behind the suggestion became all on a sudden living ; for though we have a general agreement with Hegel's fundamental doctrine, the special manner in which the enlightenment occurred is not only peculiarly Indian but also religious, for in describing the special characteristic of this enlightenment the poet says in his Reminiscence that he felt as if every one that passed on the street was dear to his soul. The revelation had not only an artistic side but an intensely religious side too, inasmuch as it enabled him to realise the feeling of the brotherhood of man which is the greatest message of all religions. In Hegel we do not find these two parts combined together as but two aspects of the same

experience. Rabindranath has therefore always characterised every true art as also being good.

In a much later work Rabindranath says that while the altruistic good of the animal world is for the purpose of race-preservation only, man has an element in him which seeks good for itself. It is this tendency in man and this superfluity, which is not required for his biological purposes, on which the ethics of man is founded. So, too, man has a superfluity of emotional energy which is not required for his self-preservation, and which he wishes to express for the very joy of expression alone. "When a feeling is aroused in our hearts, which is far in excess of the amount that can be completely absorbed by the object which has produced it, it comes back to us and makes us conscious of ourselves by its return waves." Rabindranath thus assumes that whether in knowledge, energy or emotion, man has an element, a fund which far surpasses the ordinary needs of his body and mind. This surplus emotion cannot remain at rest but creates joy in expressing itself in objective forms through images, ideas, instincts and the like and, as it returns back to consciousness, its purpose is fulfilled and we have the apprehension of beauty. Rabindranath regards this surplus of feeling as the personality of a man. He says that it is where the man is organic and has the inherent power to select things from his surroundings in order to make them his own, where he can transmute things into his living structure, or, in other words, is creative that a man displays his personality.

Behind all the forces of nature there is a spring, a source from which all the life and energy of nature flows, a sort of Personality. When a poet approaches nature it is not the separated phenomena of nature only that captivate him, but the direct communion with nature almost as a living person. It is the contact of the two personalities, as it were, that forms the essence of poetic inspiration. To a poet therefore it is not the details, discrete and separate that have their appeal, but the whole —the whole of flowing life and flowing joy. This flow of life

that the poet perceives is not a mere biological concept, it is a spiritual concept of the infinite in its concrete form. Tagore reminds us of what the poet of the Upaniṣads had said that no movement of life would be possible if the whole sky were not full of infinite joy. Tagore thinks that the function of our personality consists in transforming everything with which we may have any concern into the human. By this activity of the superfluous in us art is produced. We see here that Rabindranath still holds in 1917, when his *Personality* was published, almost the same view that became living to him in the period of his life, when he was writing his *Prabhāt Sangīt*.

In his *Religion of Man* Tagore says that man alone has an ideality in him by which he pushes to go beyond himself as no animal does. He has a feeling that his reality far exceeds himself. The call from within is deep in his mind, it is the call of his own inner truth which is beyond his direct knowledge and analytic logic. As our consciousness more and more comprehends it, new valuations are developed in us, new depths and delicacies of delight, the sober dignity of expression through elimination of tawdriness of frenzied emotion and of violence. The religion of man is thus to be sought not in his gods but in the dream of his own infinity. The theology that man invented in his earlier days only supplied him with an emotional pastime and not with spiritual inspiration. It therefore fell far short of his personality, the mission of which is to reveal humanity in the background of the eternal. It has taken man a long time to discover the nature of his own spirituality, and the various religions through which he has passed have the common characteristic that man has sought through them his own supreme value, which they have often invested with an anthropomorphic character. Such an anthropomorphic outlook distorts the truth of man and, like all mistakes in other branches of knowledge, this too has to be fought against and overcome.

In another chapter Tagore gives us his positive conception of the INFINITE as that unity in which the many and the multifold,

through which it expresses itself, falls far short of its nature; the beauty of a lotus is more than the flower in which it is expressed, and this is the infinitude of beauty, but in comprehending the concept of this infinite mere magnitude is not the determinant. The criterion is to be found in the quality of harmony which produces in us the positive sense of the quality of the infinity. It seems, however, that Rabindranath hardly tries to give us close and logical interpretation of the concept of INFINITY which is the very essence of his view of life and nature. Even in his Hibbert Lectures he seems to depend for his radical concept of INFINITY upon the vision and experience that he had had at the age of eighteen. On that particular morning he felt that all things which had seemed like disconnected waves, vagrant and transitory, now obtained a meaning in his mind in relation to a boundless sea. He felt sure that some Being who comprehended him and his world was seeking his best expression in all his experiences uniting them into an ever-widening individuality which is a spiritual work of art. He argues therefrom that the great creative mind that was shaping the universe to its eternal idea was also shaping his own experiences. But since he himself was a person it had one of its special centres of a personal relationship growing into a deepening consciousness. He felt that through all his sorrow and suffering he was passing through the labour of creation. He felt himself as an impartial spectator witnessing the mystery of a meeting of the two in a creative comradeship. He felt that here was his religion, where the INFINITE became defined in humanity and came close to him so as to need his love and co-operation and this idea of his he expressed in a later poem called "Jivan Devata".

In another place he says: "I had a vague notion as to who or what it was that touched my heart's chords, like the infant which does not know its mother's name or who or what she is. The feeling which I always had was a deep satisfaction of personality that flowed into my nature through living channels of communication from all sides." He tried to emphasise the idea

that, in spite of the differences that exist in the world of things among themselves and between us, we are conscious of an organic unity between them and us, such that we can easily trust in the testimony of our inspired moments when we feel that there is but one life that manifests itself in us as well as in the objective world —an all-pervading Personality answering to the personality of man. He held that the world consisting of the animate and inanimate found its culmination in man, its best expression. Man, as a creation, represents the creator and this is why of all creatures it has been possible for him to comprehend this world in his knowledge, in his feeling and imagination, to realise in his individual spirit a union with a spirit that is everywhere.

The poet tells us that, in the region of nature, by unlocking the secret door of the workshop one may come to the dark hall where dwells the Mechanic. In this dark hall there may be the secret of the world mechanism, but the hall of union is there where dwells the Lover in the heart of existence. We are reminded in this connection of the import of his drama *Raja* or *The King of the Dark Chamber*, where the king was not visible in any pageant or show but was visible only to the beloved lady in the dark chamber where all lights were out.

In his early days the poet was appointed Secretary to the Brahma Samaj founded by his father. He took part in the services by composing hymns which unconsciously took the many-thumbed impression of the orthodox smudge of tradition, but though he tried to persuade himself that he was in harmony with the members of that association, he gradually began to feel that he was not loyal to the religion, but only to the religious institution. This institution represented a standard truth at its static minimum and zealously guarded any growth and progress. But in religion and art nothing should be guided by the mass opinion of a community, for religion and art are peculiarly the field of the solitary communion of the individual spirit. After a long struggle the poet had to sever his connection with the Brahma Samaj. He felt that religion did not

consist in the crudity of details or pure metaphysical rarefaction. Religion was above all an all-forsaking sincerity, an intense yearning of the heart for the divine in man. Temples and mosques obstructed the path and in the babble of the teachers and the priests the voice of God cannot be heard. All rituals and ceremonies and dogmatic beliefs were an obstacle to the streaming out of the soul. The fundamental creed of his faith consisted in perceiving God in himself—the God that dwells within us as an unfathomable reality. We can meet him only by unlocking our inner doors. Yet this meeting with God, though it takes place in the solitary cavern of the heart, can at the same time so transform the person, so expand his love that in its tidal flood the whole world is deluged with a new insight, a new pulsation of feeling, so that every man comes to his heart apparelled in a celestial light. The lesson of God is not to be taken from scriptures or written books but from the scriptures of the heart. When the heart is flooded with such a direct apperception and intuition of the divine that the truth and reality of the objective humanity becomes directly intuitive, this rouses a profound feeling of longing and love. By an earnest and sincere sympathy we participate, as it were, in the lives of our fellow beings. With such a participation "religion inevitably concentrates itself on humanity which illumines our reason, inspires our wisdom, stimulates our love and claims our intelligent service ; and this God which pulsates in us through all humanity and through all universe by our participation in their essence cannot be a God of duality, a personal God who is different from me, but it is the God who is the essence of my being. I cannot adore and worship Him any more than I can worship myself."

The fundamental difference between the philosophy of the father (Maharṣi Devendranath) and the son is that the father was led by the ordinary cosmological argument of design to believe in a personal God who created the world out of nothing—a semitic attitude, and regarded the world as the product of the

majestic power of God whose energy permeates the world. Man, a tiny figure of his creation, is by duty bound intellectually to comprehend the majesty of the Master and to resign his own will to that of His. In the early stages of Rabindranath's thought he was in a sort of conflict and confusion owing to his great reverence for his father and the interpretation that he gave to the Upaniṣads, the holiest of all Hindu scriptures. It is true that the father, being a monotheist, found it difficult to accept the Upaniṣads in toto and preferred the testimony of his own experiences. This reliance on the testimony of his own experiences as being of greater value than the messages of the scriptures marks his secession from Raja Rammohan Roy and also from the orthodox schools of Hindu religion. Tagore also took his stand on the testimony of his own experience as being of greater value than anything else. But his poetic nature was filled with passion from the very beginning. His love of nature was stupendously sincere through all his poems. In *Kaḍi O Komal* and *Mānasi* we find an evidence of the dialectic of passions. Following the course of this inner dialectic of passion, we find how the lusty part of it soon revealed its smallness and filled the poet with a sense of detachment and left him craving for a passion that was infinite. Side by side with it, on particular occasions, he had visions of his positive infinity in the realisation of his inner personality which seemed to him to send forth beams of ethereal light bathing the objective world which always opposes our subjective personality as a barrier of darkness. The man in the street, the tree in the corner, the house-tops shining in the sun, are entirely indifferent and indeed opposed to our spirit which cannot make them its own. They are like stray images hanging in the intellectual compartment having no meaning for our own personality. It is only when our inner person streams out and overflows them that it can dissolve them in the juice of its own nature before it can assimilate them. Our spiritual commerce with the objective world is a continual act of creation of the

great super-spirit through our human personality, which holds within it by legacy the infinitude of creative power that is possessed by the Master.

In a passage in *Bhāsā O Chhanda*, the poet says that all events that happen are not truth. Speaking of *Rāmāyana* and its poet Vālmiki, Narada is made to say that the mind of the poet is a far greater truth and a truer abode of the hero Rama than his actual place of location in Ayodhya. But though the poet did not attach any superior value to facts and events which are not transformed by the creative activity, these could not have been regarded by him as absolutely false and non-existent. We can appeal to certain passages of Tagore wherein he admits more than two kinds of knowledge. One kind of knowledge, he says, is that which we gain from other men and the other kind is that which we attain by observation, experiment, and process of reasoning. But "the highest truth is that which we can only realise by plunging into it. And when our consciousness is fully merged in it, then we know that it is no mere acquisition but that we are one with it. Thus through meditation when our soul is in true relation with the supreme truth, then all our actions, words, behaviour become true." I would, however, add here another kind of truth of a superior order to the first and the second but lower than the third referred to above. This is the truth of aesthetic creation. Rabindranath however does not discuss this problem elaborately anywhere but from his stray utterances we may consider it as implicit in his mind that without the operation of mind nothing has any being or existence. In a passage from a *baul* writer which he quotes approvingly in his *Religion of Man*, it is said that without consciousness everything is dark and nothing exists.

Tagore does not say anything regarding the gradation of the two kinds of awareness,—awareness of the testimony of others and awareness of a scientific order through reasoning. But one may take the liberty of assuming that he would regard the first as being the weakest of all kinds of knowledge. That Rabindranath

very largely discredited mere traditional opinions, however holy they might be, is evident from his scathing criticisms of the traditional forms of Hinduism in which customary beliefs and scriptural texts had supplanted independent thinking. Rabindranath in all his criticisms of current Hindu society carries the red banner of a rational revolution. He is the most eloquent advocate of free rationalism. Thus we may well assume that he regarded the first type of knowledge as the least true. The second type of knowledge, namely that of science, was next in order of reality and truth. Science and reasoning, being based on rational thought and abstraction, we have here a contribution from our own mind. The next in order is artistic creation, such as poetry and music, wherein our inner personality grasps the external data, not as an acquirement but as an enlightenment of the personality, through its creative function, its joy of self-elaboration and its perspective of harmony and unity in multifold ralatedness. But the highest truth is the truth of religious meditation, wherein a person plunges into the heart of reality.

The argument implied in his stray utterances and poems is not primarily an argument of logic but of intuition or vision. It was the vision which he once had which gave him insight into the nature of his own personality spontaneously flowing and free. Even before this he used to write poetry and good poetry too; but he had not so long found himself. He divined for the first time that poetry and art were a spontaneous effusion of an ever-yearning creative spirit, infinite in its longings and passions, that flowed out to the objective world. His ordinary egotistic and rational self stood aside like a spectator. In this vision he also felt that the mute world beside him was all pulsating with life, and, as in a wintry dusk, through the hazy cloud of mist, one can see the glow of the sun, so through this world of inert matter and living beings he perceived the glowing personality of a super-person whose spontaneous powers were flowing in streams of light and colour and shaping in forms and hues the beautiful world that stood dancing before his eyes.



TAGORE AND EINSTEIN
Berlin 1930

It was this vision, the artist's self-discovery and mystic self-enlightenment, that gave him the key to opening the mystery of the universe of microcosm and macrocosm. In one of his poems he says :

> The eternal dream
> Is borne on the wings of ageless light
> That rends the veil of the vague
> And goes across Time,
> Weaving ceaseless patterns of being.
>
> A mystery remains dumb,
> The meaning of this pilgrimage,
> The endless adventure of existence
> Whose rush along the sky
> Flares up into innumerable rings of paths,—
> Till at last knowledge gleams out from the dusk,
> In the infinity of human spirit,
> And in that dim-lighted dawn
> She speechlessly gazes
> Through the break in the mist
> At the vision of Life and of Love,
> Emerging from the tumult
> Of profound pain and joy.

From the testimony of this vision and from the analogy of artistic creation, Tagore concludes that true creation is only possible by a person. The joy of emotion stirring up in the breast of a person can transform unmeaning objects into meaningful relatedness as integrated within the person. The pulsation of this joy is apprehended as the joy of the beautiful. The moral good is unique by itself, it cannot be measured by any other kind of good. It is its uniqueness that constitutes its infinity, for infinity is that which is not commensurable by anything other than itself. The aesthetic good or beauty is also in the very same manner unique in itself,—an inexhaustible superfluity that cannot be measured by anything else other than itself. It is for that very reason that the infinity of moral good, the infinity of beauty, has each an appeal all by itself. They are both therefore unanalysable and unthinkable by terms other than themselves. A good act done

to a person is done for the very joy of doing the good. It should not wait for anything else, no expectation of thanks is needed; if they come they are a superfluity of another order. It is like the case where one has received the full dividend for his share and unexpectedly gets a bonus.

The creation of beauty draws us towards the good. The moral ideal and the artistic ideal pull us towards the same goal. It is because Tagore concentrated himself on the creative activity of the aesthetic type, which requires as its negative condition the moral detachment from egotism and vanity, jealousy and greed, and as its positive condition a spirit of charity and friendship, that the question of moral strength was not taken up separately by him. Moral elevation was taken as a sine qua non of the spiritual activity and enlightenment. The fundamental principle of this active creation, by which art is created and religious spirituality is attained, is love. Misery and sorrow, obstacles and difficulties that are in the path of our progress are but occasions for evoking our creative impulse for overcoming them in a spirit of joy and love. The contingence is, in the deepest view, contributory to, or rather an essential condition of, the perfection of the whole. But it wears the appearance of a foreign element in which, and in spite of which, the divine purpose is worked out; and it carries with it dangerous possibilities, extremities of weakness and of suffering which it would be hard indeed to justify, if we considered them as specific parts of a deliberate plan. It is undoubtedly a source of the arduousness of reality. But it is in this arduousness that is rooted the grandeur of the world. If we could have our own choice and we thereby eliminated all pains, we should rub out our greatest opportunities. Thus Tagore says:

> O, You Cruel,
> You have done well to bring sorrow unto us.
> Let your flaming fire burn in my heart:
> The incense of my inner temple
> Would not send forth its fragrance
> Unless you burn it.

Unless you ignite it my lamp would not give light ;
Without the rude shock of sorrow
Life remains blunt and unconscious.
Sorrow therefore is your own touch
And a reward of my life.
In the darkness of ignorance
I am blind,
It is the light of your thunder
That burns up the pollution of my soul.

Again :

Without sorrow no sorrow can be removed,
The poison should be treated with a severe burn.
Let the fire burn as it please,
You should not fear.
It will be turned into ashes
And would never burn again.
It is folly to avoid pain,
Cowardice to escape from it ;
It is by dying alone
That death can be conquered.

Again :

Strike and strike me again
I can bear still more.

. . . .

Do not make my life a failure
By playing only the soft tunes ;
Let all the whispering anguish of disappointment
Flame up within me,
Like the mad winds that blow.
Awake thou the whole firmament,
And through my sorrow and anguish
Make me complete.

The real triumph of our life lies in the perception of the spirit's power that transforms the very meaning of the past and transmutes every loss into a gain. This is the way in which we can find even in the worst tragedy the beatitude of an otherwise impossible triumph. This is the real omnipotence of atoning love, unweariedly creating good out of evil. It is the nature of

goodness and love that no misery, no catastrophe, no cataclysmic revolution, can affect the purity of their being ; they are like the petals of a lotus over which rains may pass in torrents, may wither and crumble them, but would not leave a drop of water behind.

On the point of creative activity Tagore seems to waver at times, as to whether there is a super-person endowed with personality and love and creating the world for rousing up man and coming into closer communion with it. There are numerous passages both in verse and in prose, which seem to point to the view that the purposive creation of the great master has but one end and one goal, namely his self-revelation to man. Thus he says :

For meeting me you are coming through endless time,
Your sun and your moon can never cover you under their wings ;
In the mornings and evenings
Through the eternity of time
I hear the ring of your footsteps.

In many of his poems he expressed his personal adoration to this divine being.

May the tunes of music multifold
Assemble in me
And make me oblivious of myself,
And in one profound bow, oh Lord !
In one profound bow,
May the music of my little soul
Attain its completion in your ocean of silence.

But there are other passages, particularly in *Balākā*, where the significance of the creative activity has been expressed more or less in the style of Bergson. In his poem "Chanchala" he gives a picture of the cosmic movement, the movement that creates and passes away.

Unseen and speechless
Are Thy waters
That flow on, without a pause
Unlimited and continuous.

Thou Terrible and thou O Detached !
Purposeless is thy voyage,
And thy movement is thy true and speechless music.

. . . .

Moment by moment
Death flickers into life
In tremulous flames.
If Thou shouldst stand for a moment in fatigue
The startled universe
Would quake with the weight
Of the heaving heaps of mountainous matter,
Darkness, lame and speechless,
Heedless and deaf,
The dreadful and flabby obstacle
Would stand across the path
And arrest our movement . . . .

In spite of its Bergsonian ring it has an independent outlook. The poet has in many places and in many contexts said that, like the traditional God Siva, the God of death and the God of life, from whose dance the world has come into being, the creative activity, from out of which the universe has sprung into being, is eternally moving on and on, without attachment to what it creates. It creates to destroy and it destroys to create. It does not stop for a moment to take account, it moves and creates in the joy of its motion. If it ceased for a moment, the world would be a heap of dumb pollution. Our heart moves in the rhythm and the flow of the blood ; if it would stop for a moment, the whole body would be poisoned. The secret of life is the secret of motion. It is by this eternal and unceasing movement that death and life change places and, though life ends in death, it revives into life again. Our scriptures say that fire is holy ; it has no attachment, it consumes everything that is given to it. Detachment or "vairagya" has according to our scriptures been regarded as the most sensible provision for the traveller, who wishes to attain liberation.

This detachment is not merely a personal virtue. It is a cosmic virtue of the creative activity.

On the other hand, in this same work *Balākā*, the poet seems to think that our individual life has a destiny beyond death—a destiny not of merging with the cosmic creative activity but a destiny of longer and longer sojourn and its finite aspect, repeating the progressing movement of life, which was revealed in the present one. He feels that the same creative activity that is displayed in the cosmic plane should also be displayed in the finite centre qua finite, which also, being an epitome of the cosmic creative activity and carrying with it its impregnation, would by itself move in its forward march, leading itself through unceasing time. Thus in the poem "Shahjahan" the poet says :

> How far I look the traveller is nowhere !
> His beloved could not bind him,
> Nor could his empire ;
> The ocean and the mountain
> Did not obstruct him ;
> At the call of the music of the stars
> He runs towards the lion-gate of the new-born.
> Life is greater than love, life is motion unceasing,
> And motion eternal.

In another poem he says :

> This I know,
> That I have to fight with the waves
> And carry the boat,
> Hang the shrouds
> And hold the helm,—
> This is the command,
> This is the destiny.

The destiny that is unknown has woke him up and the call has come from the windy throats of the storm. The song of death has roused him in the evening for the new wedding and the new life. In the deep darkness, through all the misery, suffering, hatred, and delusion, heaving like mountainous waves, we have to carry our boats regardless of everything.

I have seen sorrow every day,
Seen sin, in various guise,
I have found from moment to moment,
In the eddy of peaceless moments,
In the streaming flow of life
All over the world,
Death is playing the game of hide and seek.

. . . .

When in the cruel night of sorrow
By the stroke of death
Man breaks into pieces
The walls and limits of his mortal sphere,—
Will not the immortal glory of God
Shed light on him ?

Here we find that the poet believes in finite immortality, though he is not sure of the exact form in which it would make its appearance. But this immortality is not limited to us human beings only ; to the poet it seems as if the whole world in its forward march is moving towards an unknown destiny, from unknown to the unknown ; there is a speechless movement and silence is only broken by the flutter of the wings.

We thus find that in two different moods he indulges in two different fancies. In some verses and writings occurring at different times of his life, he feels assured of the immortal existence of our finite being and individuality, while in sturdier, and probably more rational, moments he is satisfied to see the destiny of this finite individuality merging in the ceaseless cosmic activity.

In one of his recent publications the poet describes his vision, when through a very grave illness people had almost despaired of his life. He says that the prison walls of old ignorance vanished like mist in a moment. The creation of new life became unveiled in the first gleaming dawn of pure effulgent consciousness. He perceived himself as boundless and as crossing the milky way of the distant eternal sky in the transcendent region of light on the banks of the subtlest destruction.

But there is again a particular mood of the poet in which

he felt absolutely sceptic about the ultimate destiny. Thus in a letter in verse written to the writer the poet says :

> I do not know what day awaits
> Beyond the death.
> Shall the shadow of this life,
> With its last glimmering rays,
> Create a new phantom show,
> Some new colour,
> In the land of the setting sun ?
> What I have known of this life
> Is not little,
> It may have a limiting line,
> Still it is limitless,
> It's deep truth in my life
> Knows my self
> As pervading the whole universe.

In the same poem the poet says that before the eternal question the mind remains absolutely speechless, but sometimes it so happens that we perceive its tender touch and receive that with a lowly forehead as its greatest price. We feel that the strings of our lyre can never express the music of the transcendent. In a momentary flash we seem to perceive the heart of the beautiful but we cannot reach it. The door of this earth opens for a moment and the secret room is visible for the twinkling of an eye. The shadow of the transcendent is there, in the heart of the mortality the vessel of the immortal lies covered.

Thus in poetic inspiration he feels the deep relation that exists between the here and the beyond, but as to what exactly the relation is, the oscillating mind of the poet has given different expressions in different moods of his life. It is this undecidedness in detail and a decided condition as a general attitude, that marks the humanity of the poet. He is not a professional philosopher, who is professionally bound to give any dogmatic or logical opinion about the mystery of this universe and he is in no need of making any compromise with any particular religion.

He feels the pulsation of the world around him in his emotional ecstasy and gives such intellectual interpretation of it as appears to him to be correct for the moment. But of one thing he is certain throughout the conviction of his life, that this world is a part of the immortal, through whatsoever mortal phases it might pass.

Immediately after his vision at the time of writing the *Prabhāt Sangīt* the poet wrote his drama *Prakritir Pratisodh* (Nature's Revenge) in which he tried to show that abstract quest after the infinite, as in the case of the Ascetic, leads us nowhere. It was only when the Ascetic's heart was touched by love of a woman and its infinite yearning that he really became happy and realised the purpose of his life. The infinite must descend into the finite, before it can attain its real fulfilment. Up to the end the poet has been loyal to this perspective of life and this forms the keynote of his mental temperament. The poet in his "Reminiscences" says that the beauty of nature is not merely a mirage of the mind but is an expression of the joy of the infinite itself and it is for this reason that we forget ourselves before this beauty. This intuition is a real apprehension which is greater than all logic. It is through this emotional path that nature drew the Ascetic from out of the sphere of the finite to the royal presence of the infinite. The poet himself says that this drama was a sort of preface or introduction to all his future literary efforts.

In the devotional songs of the poet published as a collection of religious songs written at different times, the poet stretches his faith very definitely on a personal God, full of faith and trust. These songs are no doubt very charming but somehow or other we do not find here the poet in his full self-consciousness and his inner passions were moving more or less in the traditional ways of religious worship. In *Naivedya*, however, written about the age of forty, the poet's religious attitude was gradually taking an independent shape. The same reverence and love for a personal God and the same resignation appear in a deeper form. There is

a feeling that the music of the eternal God is always heard in our lives with its power of removing all unholy feelings from our mind. The greatness of God is such that once we realise it there is no scope for our petty egotism.

> If the gates of my heart remain ever closed, break open the gate O Lord ! . . . If by your call on any day, my sleep is not broken, awake me in thundering pain.

The poet is filled with delight as he looks on the world but still he is deeply conscious of his failings and prays for the destruction of his egotism. He feels sure sometimes that in our journey towards God there is no death or separation. His, however, is not an attitude of a retiring ascetic. He wishes to be harnessed to work, for he feels that our call to work is the mission of God and that, unless we entangle our hearts with passion, we can keep ourselves holy and pure even in the dust and mud of our daily interest :

> Take me by your call through the open portals into the assembly of the world . . . .

The poet was now more than forty years old and it is not improbable that he was feeling in his mind the reflection of the world-wide fame that he was to acquire in future and the urge in his inner soul for a higher destiny in the life of the world ; yet we do not anywhere find any sign of pensive disappointment that he was not yet having the recognition from the world at large that he so richly deserved. He had the broadness of heart to take pleasure and pain in the same happy spirit as being gifts of God. Thus he says :

> Whosoever has given me pleasure, has brought me near to God, and whosoever has given me pain has done the same. I bow to them all. Whosoever has loved me has lighted His candle, whosoever has come near to me has brought God into my soul and whosoever has left me has drawn me towards God,—I bow to them all. I may or I may not know, I may or I may not admit, yet wherever I open my eyes I always find God before me.

Though anxious to be harnessed to public work, he had none of the self-conceit of the politicians and public men.

Save me, O Lord, from my work. I shake from fear of my own shadow. My selfish thoughts swallow me. I weave my net of falsehood and deception everyday; my egotism shuts the door of my heart. Save me, O Lord, from myself, save me O Lord !

Yet he is not like a devotee of the older type, who wishes to enjoy God only in his private meditation. He did not wish to realise God only in subjective emotionalism, but to see Him and realise Him in His works, in Nature and, above all, in humanity. Thus he says :

I shall admit you among all—not merely in my mind and in the corner of my heart or in my own composition, but among all in the the earth and the sky shall I accept thee, O Lord. By giving up my all I shall accept thee, and by taking all that is given to me I shall accept thee. Not merely in the hymns of adoration or in the sounds of music or in solitary contemplation, but I shall accept thee where the world is awake—in whatever is pleasant and unpleasant. I shall accept thee as I do not know you, and I shall accept thee because I know you. Not merely in the pleasures of life, not merely in my beaming face, not merely in the days of advantage and opportunity, but when misery and sorrow darken like clouds around me I shall humble my head and accept thee with tears in my eyes.

This spirit of perceiving God everywhere gradually deepens as we pass to the songs of *Kheyā* (1907). But from the time of the publication of *Sāradotsav* (1909), we find gradually a deeper realization of the joy of nature as flooding the heart of the poet—nature not merely in its self-sufficient aspect of lovely beauty but as revealing God through it. That through all nature there is a shower of God's joy is a creed with which we are very familiar from an early period of the poet's life. But there it is not so concret and definite, as we find from the time of the publicatien of *Sāradotsav*. He finds the mad showers in the dancing clouds and feels within himself a yearning. In a stormy night he feels that through the whole nature his beloved was coming nearer and nearer to him and the yearning for a distant meeting becomes vivid through his lines. This is entirely a new attitude with which we were not familiar before. Whatever he felt about nature, its blessings and

its joys, were hitherto expressed in a stereotyped manner, as coming from God, and this God was introduced to us more or less in the traditional perspective. But to see God in the yearning that is produced in us by the phenomena in nature, sweet and calm, terrible and devastating, is a view which is at once untraditional and unique. We do not find it in the life-history of the great mystics of the past, either of India or of the West. It is here that we may assign the great originality of Rabindranath. To identify God with the inward psychological yearning that is produced as an echo from nature suits very well his theory of art and spirituality.

The secret of the poet's great confidence and optimism is discerned in a beautiful song of his in which he says that the worship that is not completed is not lost ; the flower that falls down before blossoming, the streamlet that is lost in a sandy desert—they also are not lost. "What is behind me is not all false, for what is unrealised here is already realised and completed in the Lord."

But with all the ravishing charms of nature through which the poet realises his deity, he is always true and loyal to his older idea that mere emotionalism and subjectivity is not the way of realising God. Thus in one of his songs he says :

> It is only there where you are in tune with the whole world that I am in contact with you—it is not in the lonely solitariness of the forest or in the corner of my own mind that I am to find my Lord. But where you are dear to all you are dear to me. Where you extend thy hands to others, it is there that my love also wakes up. Love cannot remain in secret, it spreads out like light.

From about 1920 the oscillations of his mind seem to have come to a pause and we but seldom hear of his struggles and failures. Behind all the flowers, herbs and the trees and the different seasons and their characteristic behaviour, he feels a divine presence that speaks to him the message of the unknown.

> I shall sing thy name alone and under the shade without any language and without any hope. I shall call thy name in vain, and

> without any need, for the mere intoxication of it, like the infant calling his mother merely for the sake of calling, merely for the pleasure of lisping.

Again,

> You are so so rich, O Lord ! yet you wish to take little grains of corn from my hands. The world is laughing at you that to make me a donor you will be a beggar and that from your chariot you will come down on the ground and walk with me in the fields for ages and ages.

The faith and trust manifested in songs like these is deep and fathomless. In morning and evening, through the sky and the earth he manifests within him an experience of a divine presence in love that is inimitable. But, all the same, the poet also feels that the realisation of the deity is but another name for the greater and greater realisation of his own self. Thus he says : "This my increasing knowledge of myself will never end and it is in this way alone I know Thee."

We thus see that the philosophy that slowly developed and permeated through the various stages of the poet's life was neither a logical rationalism nor a re-statement of any traditional philosophy, but is rather the echo of the spiritual experience through which the poet passed, and which, despite outside influences, is in reality a creation of the music of the soul, the inspiration of which came from within and from without. It gradually dawned on him that the divinity which danced in the outside world on the wings of the flying seasons, through his personal joys and sorrows, his yearnings and musings, is the same within and without. His own personality was but a reflection of this deity and, standing before the world and before his own mind, he discovered the super-person not as a metaphysical substance or a theological God but as a deep reality and person whom the poet experienced through all his thoughts and writings, whom he always felt as the master-musician who blew his flute through him, and filled him with joy unspeakable. Based on such an experience the philosophy of Rabindranath becomes concrete and

living ; becomes the faith of a devotee, the faith of a poet who has a vision of the unseen.

It should be unwise for us to bring the conviction of the poet in line with the convictions of other great saints and to pass any comparative judgment on it ; for that could only be the subject of a separate endeavour and, indeed, it would be as rash and as unthinking as to botanise over a flower blooming in the light of the sun. But we can only say that the depth of the poet's feelings regarding his relation with the universe, as his deity, is at least as rich as any of the passions of the great saints for their Master that the religious history of the world has made us familiar with. There is, however, a great difference between the songs of other saints and mystics and those of Rabindranath in this, that here the emotions lose their abstractness and subjectivity. It is no longer the mystic ecstasy that burns the heart and destroys the individuality but a communion which holds within it the beauty of the external nature and the breath of humanity. Our intensity of emotion has mingled with the stream of love that flows through nature and man : the individuality merges in the absolute and yet asserts itself not merely in resignation to, and deep enjoyment of, the divine, but in the spirit of the age that he incarnates, the spirit that is prepared to take humanity as its God, but yet assembles within it the depth of meditation of the Yogin and the ecstasy of love of a Nam. Ārvār, a St. Francis, a St. Catherine or a St. Teresa. It is virile yet humble, self-centred yet all-pervading ; and its expression does not imply any psychopathic debility, or the aridness of a metaphysician. It is simple and straight, and a profundity of sincerity is at the root of it all.

GURUDEVA

By Gurdial Mallik

ONLY when the gong is sounded in the Hall of Heaven does there take place a true meeting of one soul with another on earth. And such a contact is always a compact of deep love and life-long loyalty. It is like Sakuntala's ring of recognition. This is exactly what happened to the writer over a quarter of a century ago, when he was at College, in Bombay. One morning he read in a leading local daily that the Poet of Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore, had been awarded the Nobel Prize for his *Gitanjali*. The paper had also published his photograph. The moment my eyes fell on his handsome face, some one within me exclaimed in a tone of ecstasy, "This great man will exercise a transforming influence on your life."

But some years had to elapse before I could have the rare privilege and pleasure of touching his feet in reverence, at Santiniketan. I went there as a pilgrim in August 1919 and stayed in the *Ashrama* for about a fortnight. As ill-luck would have it, the Poet was ill and no visitors were ever allowed at the time into his presence. And I would have returned home sorely disappointed had not that good man of God, Mr. C. F. Andrews, very kindly arranged for me a five-minute interview with the Poet.

At the appointed time I was ushered into his private apartment. He returned my humble greetings with a smiling nod. We sat for the remaining few minutes in silence without exchanging a single word with each other. When the allotted time was about to be over, Mr. Andrews beckoned to me to rise and take leave of the Poet. I obeyed. And then the miracle happened! As I was about to depart from his presence, he looked up and said, "Your seat here has been vacant for long; so come and occupy it whenever you can." Whereupon I was

moved to the depths of my being. I felt I was re-born and I experienced at the time an expansion of consciousness which seemed to touch the uttermost ends of the universe. And he, whom I had known till then as a Poet, now became my *Gurudeva*, my Master.

Since then, off and on, I have been honoured with opportunities to serve his ideals and institution in my own humble way. But, strange to say, my lips have ever remained sealed whenever I have found myself in his presence. This may be due to a lamentable lack of the interrogative faculty in me, or because I feel overawed by the majesty of his Himalayan mind. One thing, however, I cannot help truthfully testifying to, that, sitting near him, I have invariably found that my soul is mysteriously unveiled to me.

Looking back, however, and trying to assess what I owe to him, I would like to observe, in a brief compass, that the transmuting touch of his personality has helped me to sense and see that Truth is circular, that it has its nest as well as its sky. And this has deepened my understanding and appreciation of its various aspects and expressions. I have realized that the world is larger than the well of the frog in the fable and that life is both a symphony and a synthesis. The joy of being all the time on the road and travelling is far greater than worshipping at a wayside shrine, no matter how self-satisfying might be the sense of steeled security in its shadow. Man is the focus-point and the fulcrum of the Eternal Truth, Beauty and Goodness. And so I have learnt to love humanity.

Blessed am I that the Freedom of the City of His Love has been conferred on me through his grace. I feel blessed like the bamboo piece which the flute-player has fashioned into a vehicle for pouring forth "melodies eternally new". To-day I salute him with grateful love and say to him, in all humility, "Master, my debt to you is of a nature which can never be paid. But, may I just tell you that your magic touch has made me a singer and a servant of the Spirit ?"



RABINDRANATH WITH PRINCIPAL L. P. JACKS
Oxford 1930

THE POET AS EDUCATIONIST

By K. R. Kripalani

Of the many priceless gifts which the great Poet of India has given to his people and to his age, the educational experiment at Santiniketan is by no means the least. Among his inimitable creations, it occupies a unique place. Unlike his other compositions he did not release it in a finished and perfect form, but, like Nature herself, gave it life and impulse, and has since watched and tended its growth, inviting all those who may to share in the creation. Its defects and imperfections, therefore, reflect the defects and imperfections of ourselves in so far as we have failed to justify the trust he has left to us ; for it is as much a gift to his countrymen as a test of their worthiness to receive it. That test is being worked out and only the future can measure its results.

This strange entity that has grown for forty years and seems still to grow, has been variously described as an asrama where the "forest ideals" of the ancient Indian sages are sought to be revived ; as an experiment in child education ; as a centre of Indian Renaissance in art and music ; as an international seat of learning ; as a social and economic movement for the uplift of Indian village life. Even more variously it has been judged, some over-estimating its actual contribution, others dismissing it as a mere poet's fancy. Some have even sneered at it as a haunt of lotus-eaters. No criticism has been adequate, and, none, we hope, entirely malicious ; for an achievement that has not been worked out, an ideal whose possibilities are still struggling, is difficult to judge. A poet's dream, it undoubtedly is, for who but a poet can "attract the voice which is yet inaudible in the air", or "bring the earliest tidings of the unborn flower to a sceptic world" ? A haunt of lotus-eaters, it may easily become, for a thing of beauty, though it may inspire

sincere man to noble endeavours, does surely attract many idlers. Those who would understand Santiniketan must therefore suspend their judgment for a while and view it as a growing, struggling thing, with many a scar on its form, left by its forty years of strife in an unbelieving world. It has grown from such humble beginnings that not even the great planter knew what the seed he was watering would finally grow into.

Indeed, we do not know if, had the Poet known that he was creating such a vast and many-sided institution, he would have fixed its form in its present shape, or would have selected the present site for the purpose. For materially the soil seems hostile to the purpose. Barren and inhospitable, it yields even drinking water grudgingly and at great cost. But this hungry and parched soil must have hid a great spiritual secret, for it drew to it the footsteps, and caught the imagination, of a great man of uncommon spiritual sensitiveness, the Mahaṛṣi Devendranath Tagore. One may still see the memorable spot sheltered by the two aged *chhatim* trees, where the great sage used to sit and meditate on the One Eternal. His youngest son was then little more than a babe, and the Mahaṛṣi, with that unconscious prophetic insight which we associate with spiritual men, prepared the future field of his son's endeavours by filling that obscure, neglected spot with his benediction and by giving it its first habitation and a name. It was natural, therefore, that many years later when the son, who had already made his mark as a great poet and a daring thinker, was looking about for a quiet place, remote from the daily distractions of city life, where he could conduct his first experiments in child education, his choice should fall on a place, near at hand and hallowed by its association with his great father. Thus began in 1901 Santiniketan's career as an educational centre. How humble the beginning was may be gauged from the fact that the poet-teacher's first batch comprised less than half a dozen pupils.

II

This fact has never ceased to surprise me that a great poet, in the prime of manhood, when his creative powers were in their full swing, should have chosen to adopt the vocation of a schoolmaster—the latest among the despised castes of India—in a neglected corner of Bengal. That he did so and preferred the hardships of a life of stark simplicity (Bolpur then had little to offer by way of what are known as the amenities of life) to the easy ways and splendid society of his family in Calcutta, is one more proof, if such were needed, of Rabindranath's deep and passionate interest in problems affecting the welfare of his country. And of such problems none seemed to him more deserving of attention than the system of education which had established itself in the country under the patronage of the British rulers. As early as 1890, when the Poet was not yet thirty, he wrote an essay—*Sikshār Her-pher*, in which he pointed out the tortuosities of the then prevailing system of education which, instead of developing, stunted the minds of the growing generation. Forced at a very early age to master the intricacies of a foreign language, the Indian child expends all the resources of his mind in trying to balance himself on crutches and in the meanwhile forgets the use of his legs. He is worse off than the unlettered savage who at least knows how to enjoy the use of his limbs.

The Poet knew by his own bitter experience that of all the handicaps he had to overcome in his struggle to educate himself, the greatest was the system of education then prevailing in the country, a system admirably suited to turn out a race of half-grown, literate, docile subordinates, answering to Aristotle's description of ideal slaves, men able to understand reason without possessing it. To liberate the children of the next generation from this mechanical and degrading "education factory,—lifeless, colourless, dissociated from the context of the universe, within bare white walls staring like eye-balls of the dead", became the mission

to which the Poet dedicated the best years of his life. Describing his own school days, he recalls : "We had to sit inert, like dead specimens of some museum, whilst lessons were pelted at us from on high, like hailstones on flowers." An apt simile. For children to him are the flowers of humanity who must be allowed to grow in freedom and beauty. The arrogant school master must help, and not thwart, the direct influence on the child's mind of the great teacher Nature. The child's mind is extraordinarily aware of the things he sees around him and is much more receptive than his teacher's to sense-impressions. The wise teacher must therefore provide him with the environment which will stimulate and feed this receptivity. The child learns with his limbs and with his senses, long before he is able to understand with his full mind. And so this poet, who was a great lover of children, set out to create for them an environment which would make their "introduction to the great world of reality easy and joyful." And therefore in his School it was "no impertinence for the boys to be boys."

Side by side with free physical development and constant and direct imbibing of the influences of Nature, music and the arts must be directed to train the child's emotions and his budding sensibility. It is interesting to observe how close in this particular is this Indian sage's approach to education to that of the Greek thinkers. Both Plato and Aristotle attached tremendous significance to the moulding influence of music and the arts on the soul of the citizen in training. Not only did they regard a well thought-out system of education as the greatest moulding influence in society, but they conceived of education in terms of a full and harmonious development of the individual. The one-sided emphasis on mere learning is a bias characteristic of modern Western universities and their caricatures in India, and none has condemned it more passionately than Rabindranath.

Permeating and guiding all these various influences on the growing child's mind are the wise sympathy and understanding of the teacher. The teacher must share the life of the pupil and

watch his activity, not only in the class room but outside as well. For the child is learning all the time and the teacher who knows him only in the class room for stated periods in the day can hardly know him. A good school must therefore be residential. The Poet himself shared the life of his pupils and by his wise example created a tradition at Santiniketan which is one of its enduring glories. Today his age and health prevent him from giving that practical guidance, and those of us to whom he has entrusted this tradition are little men, lacking his great sympathy and wisdom. But the tradition nevertheless sustains us and we avail of it according to our varying capacity. But even today one has only to watch Nandalal Bose at work with his students to realise how great are the results when a wise teacher with sympathy, insight and imagination is there to carry on the Poet's ideals.

Santiniketan, however, was destined to become much more than a School and was to grow with its Founder's ideals. The very first few years of the century discovered in India a ferment of new ideas and political aspirations. His own province, in particular, was the centre of a great and growing revolutionary movement. The Poet whose passionate and uplifting writings had done much to create those aspirations now felt the responsibility of shaping them as well. His experience of those agitated times taught him, however, that a true and lasting basis of a people's national aspirations could only rest on their own creative and constructive activities. We must purge our moral, social and economic life of its evils and establish our own self-respect before we can truly claim the respect of others. In his own School he had already taught his boys the great lesson of human equality and had abolished the social distinction between the Brahmin and the so-called untouchable, the Hindu and the Muslim. Now he strove consciously to link the educational activities at Santiniketan to the reconstruction of the social and economic life of the villages near by. In 1913 some land was purchased by him near the village Surul, which served as the nucleus of what today is known as Sriniketan. Today that modest

beginning has grown to large dimensions and many and varied are its activities, of which the latest is the good work it is doing to relieve the suffering of the poor victims of this year's famine.

Meanwhile the conviction had been growing on the Poet that the new generation of his countrymen was very much like the branches of a tree, eagerly stretching out for life and expression, while the soil from which the roots had sprung was daily being repudiated. The so-called intelligentsia of that generation, and to a lesser extent even of this, were borrowing their patterns of thought, of conduct, even of their feelings, from the West, thereby justifying the Poet's charge that the "educational institutions in our country are India's alms-bowl of knowledge ; they lower our intellectual self-respect ; they encourage us to make a foolish display of decorations composed of borrowed feathers." "Once upon a time," he reminded his countrymen, "we were in possession of such a thing as our own mind in India. It was living. It thought, it felt, it expressed itself. It was receptive as well as productive. That this mind could be of any use in the process, or in the end, of our education was overlooked by our modern educational dispensation." "Life never imitates, it assimilates", and so he warned them that "if the whole world grows at last into an exaggerated West, then such an illimitable parody of the modern age will die, crushed beneath its own absurdity." It was an obvious truth and yet it needed reiteration by him that "for proficiency in walking, it is better to train the muscles of our own legs than to strut upon wooden ones of foreign make, although they clatter and cause more surprise at our skill in using them than if they were living and real." And so the Poet set about to build up a centre of indigenous learning and culture, "to break open the treasure-trove of our ancestors and use it for the commerce of life". Thus were established the Vidya-Bhavana (Institute of Oriental Research) and the Kala-Bhavana, (the Home of Fine Arts), for without the arts, "which are the spontaneous overflow of our deeper nature and spiritual magnificence", knowledge is "a dead load of dumb wisdom".

But though Rabindranath thus became the most earnest exponent of a full and complete national renaissance, he was no narrow nationalist, who distrusted foreign culture and influence as such. On the contrary, if ever there was a seer whose range of sympathy knew no bounds, racial or geographical, it is he. What he objected to was "the artificial arrangement by which foreign education tends to occupy all the space of our national mind." His many world tours had revealed to him the dangers of a narrow and self-complacent nationalism and he was one of the earliest thinkers to give passionate utterance to these fears. What he had prophesied then is being borne out today to the very letter. As usual, he was not content with mere talking, but wanted to fulfil his own share of the responsibility. He therefore declared open his own centre at Santiniketan to the whole world and invited thinkers, scholars and artists, irrespective of any distinction, to come and collaborate in the task of interpreting the different cultures and religions of the world, and thereby help in creating that mutual sympathy, understanding and tolerance on which alone can the unity of mankind rest. Thus was laid the foundation at Santiniketan of Visva-Bharati, as a seat of International Learning and Culture.

III

In conclusion the Poet's ideals of education may be summed up as follows :

First : The child should be brought up in such environments as would provide him with opportunities of direct and close contact with Nature. Civilized existence in society imposes, in any case, such severe restraints on the first, fresh and vital impulses of life that human nature tends to be perverted unless its impulses are renewed and revitalised with constant reference to Nature.

Second : The child's senses being more alert than his mind, teaching in its early stage should be, as far as possible,

through play and activity, so that the child enjoys as he learns. He should be encouraged to *do* things himself and to lean as little as possible on his teacher.

Third : Both through their work and through their play the children must be constantly trained in self-reliance and hardihood,—two virtues on which the Poet lays great emphasis, and the lack of which, alas ! tends to make the average middle-class Indian boy such a mollycoddle. They are best developed by simple living, by looking after one's own needs, by learning to "rough" it and by the necessity of drawing on one's own resources and having to improvise one's own games and entertainments. As a further training in self-reliance the Poet had also introduced at Santiniketan the practice of students' self-government. Matters concerning dormitory discipline, picnics, organised entertainments and literary and other creative activities are even now mostly regulated by the students themselves.

Fourth : Equal emphasis should be laid on individual initiative and on group- or corporate-action, so that, along with self-reliance, a sense of community service and esprit de corps should also grow. The students must not only learn to act in common but should also feel and claim the community or the institution as their own. Those who have seen the students of Santiniketan either on excursion or engaged in some group-activity at Santiniketan, like fresco-painting, stage-decorating, etc. or seen them quietly take their turn by day and by night when one of their comrades, or indeed any asrama resident, falls seriously ill, or ever heard them sing lustily their local anthem—*Āmāder Santiniketan* (She is our own, the darling of our hearts, our Santiniketan), will appreciate the strength and beauty of this spirit.

Fifth : All teaching should be through the mother-tongue so that the child's natural urge for self-expression should not be impeded by the obstacles of unfamiliar sounds.

Sixth : When the child's senses have been trained to a proper awareness of his surroundings and he has learnt to observe

and love Nature, his experiences should then be made intelligible to him, at a later stage, in terms of scientific categories. (For the Poet is a great advocate of scientific knowledge, though he denounces its misuse by men as an instrument of greed for power. He has himself written a general introduction to science for Bengali readers, entitled *Visva-Parichaya.*)

Seventh : Education to be real must be of the whole man, of the emotions and the senses as much as of the intellect. Music and the arts which refine and heighten sensibility, purge emotions and train one in the exquisite use of his natural instruments of self-expression, must be made to exercise their influence on the child from his infancy.

Eighth : While the child's growing sensibility should be well grounded in an adequate appreciation of the best traditions of his people's cultural heritage, his activities, as he grows up, should be linked with the economic life of the great mass of his countrymen. Hence the introduction and evolution at Santiniketan of the beautiful seasonal festivals, of the Festival of Tree-planting and Ploughing, of an almost uninterrupted succession of cultural activities, and the development at Sriniketan of the various schemes of rural uplift.

Ninth : Though well-rooted in its own indigenous soil, the citizen-in-embryo's social and moral consciousness should be extended to an appreciation of other peoples' cultures and ideals of life as well. To bound the mental horizon by national frontiers is not only to sow the seeds of discord among mankind but is an abridgment of the human personality itself. To foster an international and world outlook is, therefore, one of the most emphasised aims of the Poet's scheme of education at Santiniketan.

And *last* but not least : To ensure that the emphasis on individual self-expression and the development of the personality does not degenerate into a sharpening of the ego, with its inevitable passions of cupidity and self-aggrandizement, and thereby defeat the very aim of true education, the individual consciousness must be charged with that sense of the one,

impersonal and universal Brahman (or God, Over-soul, Mind, Will or Law, whichever term one prefers), pervading and making akin all life and nature, which is the common and, one may say, the one redeeming feature of the religions of mankind. Mere *intellectual* conviction of the unity of mankind or of the common destiny of any particular race or class, however effective as instruments of policy, are insufficient by themselves to subdue the tempest of man's overweening ego. Thought has to be realized as religious feeling before it can gain access to that basement of the consciousness where operates in silence the power-house of the mind.

These are the great ideals which this great poet, sage and friend of mankind has tried to realise at Santiniketan, against tremendous obstacles. How far the seeds he has planted have borne fruit, is yet difficult to estimate. He has done his part, given us great ideals and has not only indicated the means of working them but has actually set them going. No man ever left a richer or a nobler heritage of great possibilities to his people than he has done. If his people do not acknowledge the trust, if they let these possibilities wither for want of nourishment, or, worse still, if they mutilate and distort them by working them to lesser ends, then they will only prove their own unworthiness as heirs. If the high proves too high and the heroic too hard, it will be because we are little men, with small minds and puny shoulders. This is the answer to the persistent critic who asks, "What will happen to Santiniketan, when the Poet is no more ?" What has happened to all the great ideals, bequeathed to humanity by its great men ? Men live and grow on them or perish in betraying them, as they are perishing before our very eyes.

THE GENIUS OF RABINDRANATH— ITS CHARACTER AND LINEAGE

By Kshitimohan Sen

BIOLOGISTS consider all living things as the evolved outcome of their previous organic stage ; variants there might occur but nothing could appear all of a sudden as something born of itself. Every living object constitutes the continuity or extension of some unbroken stream of life. That is why, in the world of men, every one has a generic or family name, along with his specific personal name. The two together introduce him to others in the most complete manner. In this respect the Sanskrit word *santāna* (offspring) is wonderfully significant.

The most precious possession of a nation is its literature. Wherever that literature is truly living and great, most assuredly it has always maintained a vital connection with the literary expression of the preceding ages. The vast literature of Rabindranath is one of the greatest fortunes of India to-day. A literature so keenly pulsating with life must reveal the closest relationship with the deepest thought traditions of ancient India. The exquisite expression of his genius, although original, is nothing accidental nor does it stand all by itself. His genius, too, may be said to have a name both personal and lineal. In this article we shall try to trace and discuss the unbroken connection that Rabindranath's literature has maintained with the undying thought traditions and literary expressions of ancient India.

The most ancient literature of India are the Vedas. A major portion of them are mainly concerned with rites and rituals, hymns and psalms, connected with religious observances. And yet through them flows a thin stream of poetry which the lovers of literature would consider to be the very soul of the Vedas. It is like the thin line of water trickling along the edge of the vast sand-bed and constituting the life of the river. To the thirsty

souls the vast heaps of sand have no meaning as compared to that refreshing little stream of water.

The inner poetry of the Vedas is to be found in their verses and songs, and it is with the songs and poems of Rabindranath that they often have the greatest affinity. Nobody should imagine that by affinity I mean that the Poet has directly drawn upon the Vedas for his literary inspiration. His genius is beyond all compare and needs no plagiarism to bolster it. I mean no more than that there is a vital connection between his literature and that of the ancient India—a continuity of life as inevitable as in the world of biology.

Very early in life Rabindranath had made a careful study of the Upaniṣads ; his own spiritual career, his "sādhanā" had found in them inspiration and sustenance. No wonder that many of their ideas have often crept into some of his sermons and religious songs as well. What is really surprising is that some passages in the Saṃhitā, with which Rabindranath had the remotest chance of contact, appear to contain the earliest seeds of some of his deepest poetic ideas. In such instances we see that, however great a genius might be, if his works are instinct with life they cannot be wholly accidental. Whether we know it or not, in their basic ideas they are all imperceptibly connected in a sequence with the parent stream.

The early initiation of Rabindranath in the faith of the Upaniṣads finds its reflection in profound utterances in the poems 57, 58 and 60 of *Naivedya*.

The poem 57 begins thus :

হে সকল ঈশ্বরের পরম ঈশ্বর

The mantra 6/7 of Svetāsvatara is :

तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरम् ॥

The poem 57 continues :

তপোবন তরুচ্ছায়ে মেঘমন্দ্রস্বর
ঘোষণা করিয়াছিল সবার উপরে

অগ্নিতে জলেতে এই বিশ্বচরাচরে
বনস্পতি ওষধিতে এক দেবতার
অখণ্ড অক্ষয় ঐক্য। সে বাক্য উদার
এই ভারতেরি।

Herein is reflected the well-known mantra of the Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad :

यो देवोऽग्नौ योऽप्सु
यो विश्वं भुवनमाविवेश।
य ओषधीषु यो वनस्पतिषु
तस्मै देवाय नमो नमः॥ (২,১৭)

In the 58th poem of *Naivedya* Rabindranath writes :

তাঁহারা দেখিয়াছেন—বিশ্বচরাচর
ঝরিছে আনন্দ হ'তে আনন্দ-নির্ঝর ;
অগ্নিতে প্রত্যেক শিখা ভয়ে তব কাঁপে
বায়ুর প্রত্যেক শ্বাস তোমারি প্রতাপে,
তোমার আদেশ বহি মৃত্যু দিবারাত
চরাচর মর্মরিয়া করে যাতায়াত ;
গিরি উঠিয়াছে ঊর্ধ্বে তোমার ইঙ্গিতে
নদী ধায় দিকে দিকে তোমারি সংগীতে ;
শূন্যে শূন্যে চন্দ্র সূর্য গ্রহ তারা যত
অনন্ত প্রাণের মাঝে কাঁপিছে নিয়ত।

Here one meets with three distinct messages of the Upaniṣads. The first one is from the Taittirīya :

आनन्दाद्ध्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते,
आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति, आनन्दं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति॥ (३,६)

The next one is from the Kaṭhopaniṣad :

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति, भयात् तपति सूर्यः।
भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च मृत्युर्धावति पंचमः॥ (६,३)

The cosmic image in the poem is also from another mantra of the Kaṭhopaniṣad :

यदिदं किंच जगत् सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ॥ (६,२)

In the poem 60 of *Naivedya* the Poet proclaims :

. . . শোন বিশ্বজন
শোন অমৃতের পুত্র যত দেবগণ
দিব্যধামবাসী, . . .

It is the same message as in the Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad :

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा
आ ये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्थुः ॥ (२,५)

This mantra is also found in the Rigveda (10, 13, 1) but it is more likely that the Poet came across this in the Upaniṣads with which he has been more familiar since his boyhood days.

That same poem of *Naivedya* has the following lines :

. . . আমি জেনেছি তাঁহারে,
মহান্ত পুরুষ যিনি আঁধারের পারে
জ্যোতির্ময় ; তাঁরে জেনে, তাঁর পানে চাহি
মৃত্যুরে লঙ্ঘিতে পার, অন্যপথ নাহি ॥

The exact original of this is to be found in the following message from the Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad :

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम्
आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।
तमेव विदित्वाति मृत्युमेति
नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥ (३,८)

Each and every mantra of the Iśopaniṣad has ever been deeply fixed in the mind of Rabindranath. ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वम् (ईश ; १)

"All things in this life are pervaded by God" ; कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच् छतं समाः (ईश, २) "One should desire for an active life lasting for hundred years in order to perform the duties thereof" ;—these are the ideals that constitute the very basis of Rabindranath's life. "Whatever that moves remains unmoved, that which is distant is very near as well, and being within remains outside" (Iśo. 5). "Realise thyself in this creation and the creation within thyself" (Iśo. 6). "The knowledge of the Brahma shorn of all other knowledge of this world is imperfect, and every other knowledge also is fruitless without the knowledge of the Brahma" (Iśo. 9). "One who realises both these types of knowledge in their true harmony transcends Death and attains Immortality" (Iśo. 11). "The rich and many-coloured garb that hides the truth should be removed and the Eternal Truth is to be seen face to face" (Iśo. 15). "One perfect form evolves out of another, yet there is no decay or loss to the ever perfect One" (Iśopaniṣad, closing mantra).

These truths permeate the whole of Rabindranath's literature. His sermons and religious expositions collected in the *Santiniketan* series have freely drawn upon the thoughts and ideas of the Upaniṣads and have reclothed them into things of everlasting freshness and beauty. Some of the anecdotes of the Upaniṣads have also moved him deeply, e. g. the story of Satyakāma, son of Jabālā in the fourth part of the fourth chapter of the Chhāndogya Upaniṣad. This story of an ideally truthful Brahmachāri, born of uncertain parentage, has been beautifully retold by the Poet in the poem named *Brāhman* in *Chitrā.*

He has been immensely attracted also by the Tapovanas or the forest abodes which in the days of the Upaniṣads were the centres for practising Brahmacharya. The underlying falsities of the modern civilization that flourished round the towns and cities had pained him very much. That was why at first he retired to Shelaidah and then, deciding to found a centre of peaceful activity for the people of the country at large, he started

the 'Brahmacharyāsrama' in the Tapovana founded by his father Mahaṛṣi Devendranath, at Santiniketan.

In *Chaitāli* how deftly the Poet puts in one poem the story of the Rāmāyana. So long as Rāma lived in the forest he had a living Sītā as his mate, but as soon as he came to the city he lost her and had only the golden image of Sītā to console him. A similar tragedy resulting from the neglect of the clean and fresh life of the Tapovanas is retold in the story of Śakuntalā and Duṣyanta in the poem *Bané O Rājye*. In the poem *Sabhyatār Prati* the Poet has painted the picture of the Tapovanas of olden times. Even in the language of these and several other poems of *Chaitāli* the Poet has consciously maintained a classical quality akin to that of the ancient poets of India. The poems 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, of *Utsarga* must also be mentioned in this connection as further illustrations where the ideas and the language of an ancient age reveal the mystery that is common to both.

In *Kshanikā* Rabindranath gave up the classical style and experimented with the language of everyday use. But there too in the poem *Sekāl* pictures of Kālidāsa's Meghaduta have been painted in the most colloquial language.

His essays in *Prāchin Sāhitya* illustrate how even in the realm of prose he has followed the same principle of describing the classical age in an appropriate classical language. It is this sublime language that has largely enabled him to bring once again into life the ages of the Epics and of Kālidāsa in the mind of his readers.

So far we have traced the connection of Rabindranath's literature with the Upaniṣads with which his acquaintance has always been direct and intimate. He had almost no occasion to come across the text of the Vedic Saṃhitās which deal chiefly with sacrificial rites and rituals and hymns and prayers intended to please gods. But the ancient sages of the Vedas did not write only on the gods and heavens : descriptions of the Universe, Nature, the seasons, the dawn (Uṣā) and men also occur in the Vedas. There one often comes across utterances of very deep



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significance that baffle even a modern mind. Rabindranath seems to have an inner relation with the ideas contained in many of such passages. His implicit affinity with these richest thoughts and ideas of the Vedas without any previous acquaintance with them clearly reveals that, however universal his genius might be, it maintains its lineal connection with the ancient traditions of India,—and this was quite natural.

In *Kheyā* Rabindranath describes the dawn in the following words :

আজ বুকের বসন ছিঁড়ে ফেলে
দাঁড়িয়েছে এই প্রভাতখানি।
আকাশেতে সোনার আলোয়
ছড়িয়ে গেল তাঁহার বাণী॥ (বিকাশ)

This Dawn has torn open the cover of her breast and stands before us in her full glory. The sky is flooded with her message of golden light.

The Poet had no possible chance of knowing that some thousands of years ago Visvāmitra had worshipped the dawn in almost similar language :

अव स्यूमेव चिन्वती मघोन्युषा याति स्वसरस्य पत्नी ॥

Having thrown away the cover of her breast there walks the glorious Dawn—the queen of heaven. (Rigveda ; 3, 61, 4).

In the 80th sukta of the 5th mandal there is a wonderful description of dawn in a prayer. The whole of it is magnificent poetry :

एषा शुभ्रा न तन्वो विदानोर्ध्वेव स्नाती दृशये नो अस्थात् ॥ (ऋक् ; ५,८०,५)

The stainless milk-white Dawn arises like a lady freshly bathed revealing all her beauty and glory to our eyes.

अप स्वसुरुषसो नग् जिहीते
रिणक्ति कृष्णी ररुषाय पंथाम् ॥ (ऋक् ; ७, ७१, १)

The bright and beautiful Dawn has arrived. Night is her black sister. She steps aside from her path and in tears bids adieu to the glorious Dawn.

Whenever we read this hymn, we remember the poem *Sesh Upahār* in Rabindranath's *Mānasi* :

আমি রাত্রি, তুমি ফুল . . .
যখন ফুটিলে তুমি . . .
তখনি প্রভাত এল, ফুরাল আমার কাল

. . . .

. . . তখন পড়িল ঝরে'
আমার নয়ন হতে তোমার নয়ন পরে
একটি শিশিরকণা। চলে গেনু পরপার। . . .

I am the night, you are the flower ; As you blossomed there appeared dawn ; with that my days came to their close.

. . .

A dew drop of tear fell from my eyes into yours and I left for the other shore.

The description of the rains in the Vedas is magnificent. The 83rd sukta of the 5th mandala in the Rigveda is in itself a wonderful picture of rain.

रथीव कशयाश्वाँ अभिक्षिपन्नाविर्दूतान् कृणुते वर्ष्यां अह।
दूरात् सिंहस्य स्तनथा उदीरते यत् पर्जन्यः कृणुते वर्ष्यं नभः ॥
(ऋक् ; ५, ८३, ३)

The Lord of rain has come like a brave charioteer lashing the clouds with the golden whip of lightning. One can hear the distant thunder roaring like a lion. The sky is overcast with cloud and the rain is pouring in torrents.

Those who are familiar with the beautiful rain songs of Rabindranath will easily sense the deep inner sympathy between

his poetic emotion and that of the Vedic sages across the incalculable distance of time.

The graphic description of autumn in the Yajurveda also reveals the sympathetic imagination of the ancient sages. One would hardly expect Rabindranath to know these scattered pieces of poetry in the Vedas, although in his *Sāradotsava* (The Autumn Festival) he has adopted the following picture of the autumn from the Yajurveda :

अक्षिदुःखोत्थितस्यैव विप्रसन्ने कनीनिके ।
आंक्ते चाद्गणं नास्ति ऋभूणां तन्निबोधत ।
कनकाभानि वासांसि अहतानि निबोधत ।
अन्नमश्नीत मृज्मीत अहं वो जीवनप्रदः ।
एता वाचः प्रयुज्यन्ते शरद् यत्रोपदृश्यते ॥ (तैत्तिरीय आरण्यक ; २, ४, १)

The eyes are now free from their grief. With the ceasing of rain they have received the pleasant touch of fresh light in them. It is a magic touch that has removed all darkness. All this is God's own grace. His garment is of golden colour, stainless and perfect. Enjoy ye all food in plenty. Wash your bodies and anoint them with fragrant oil, for I, the life-giving Autumn, have come.

In *Gitāñjali* we have the following song :

কথা ছিল এক তরীতে কেবল তুমি আমি
যাব অকারণে ভেসে কেবল ভেসে ;
ত্রিভুবনে জানবে না কেউ আমরা তীর্থগামী
কোথায় যেতেছি কোন্ দেশে সে কোন্ দেশে ।
কূলহারা সেই সমুদ্র মাঝখানে
শোনাব গান একলা তোমার কানে,
ঢেউয়ের মতন ভাষা বাঁধনহারা
আমার সেই রাগিণী শুন্‌বে নীরব হেসে । (গীতাঞ্জলি ; নং ৮৪)

This reminds us of one of the songs of Vasiṣtha in the 7th mandala of the Rigveda. There is no word for word resemblance between the two songs yet one cannot deny their similarity in

idea. So far as our knowledge goes, Rabindranath had no occasion to come across this song. This community of idea between the poets of two widely different ages surely signifies unity of their inner being.

आ यद् रुहाव वरुणश्च नावं प्रयत् समुद्रमीरयाव मध्यं ।
अधि यदपां स्नुभिश्चराव प्र प्रेंख इंखयावहै शुभे कं ॥ (ऋक्; ३, ८८, ७)

When God (my beloved) and I floated far into the sea on the same boat; when in great joy we have swung to and fro in our boat on the crest of the waves.

वसिष्ठं ह वरुणो नाव्याधादृषिं चकार स्वपामहोभिः ।
स्तोतारं विप्रः सुदिनत्वे अह्नां यान्नु द्यावस्ततनन्यादुषासः ॥ (ऋक्; ७,८८,४)

My God gave me a seat in his boat and most graciously honoured me with the right of singing to him. It was a rare occasion when my heavenly Lord asked me to fill my mornings and days with songs of prayer.

क त्यानि नौ सख्या बभूवुः सचावहे यदवृकं पुराचित् ॥ (ऋक्; ७,८८,५)

Where has disappeared that deep love of ours? My mind now searches in vain for the tranquil and unhampered love of those days.

In our present age the excellence of a literature is adjudged by its closeness to realities of life. We are not sure whether such a test was in vogue in ancient India. But there is no room left for doubt that the science and duties of the everyday world were not treated with indifference by the sages of the Iśopaniṣad. According to them life attained its perfection through the proper wedding of spiritual culture to material knowledge. In ancient days the soundness of even the highest spiritual ideas was tested by observing how far they were in harmony with the realities of the material world.

This is why Lord Buddha touched the ground (Bhumisparśa mudrā) while preaching his highest spiritual principles. He perhaps wanted to suggest to his disciples—"the truth of my

statements will be verified in your life on this earth that I touch with my hand." We do not know what surer test of reality even a modern mind could have suggested.

The sages of the Vedas Rik, Yaju and Sāma, have contemplated mostly on heaven and the gods. The Atharvaveda appears as though to supplement them with its forceful treatment of ideas connected with the world and humanity. Even in the Rigveda one occasionally comes across such ideas as service of humanity (Rik ; 1, 31, 14). Heaven and earth are mentioned jointly in such oft-repeated phrases as— द्यावापृथिवी. (1, 159 sukta ; 185 sukta ; II, 36 sukta ; VI, 170 sukta). V, 84 sukta is an exclusive hymn to the Earth. But the extolment of the earth has reached its high watermark in the Atharvaveda. The 1st sukta of the 12th kānda of the Atharvaveda consists of 63 slokas. The whole of that sukta is a long continued song in praise of the great Earth. Studied side by side with this Vedic hymn such well-known poems of Rabindranath as *Vasundharā* (The Earth), *Svarga Haitè Vidāy* (Farewell to Heaven) and *Viśva Nritya* (Cosmic Dance) appear to strike almost a parallel note.

A common bond of love that Rabindranath's soul ever perceives with the different races and the people of the different countries in this world finds its best expression in his poem *Vasundharā*. His heart longs for friendship with the people of the desert, Tibetans, Persians, Tartars, Chinese and even with the aboriginal tribes. Within his inmost being he has heard even the call of the turbulent Bedouines of Arabia (*Duranta Āśā*, in *Mānasi.*) This longing for union witn the greater humanity is traceable in the Brātya-kānda of the Atharvaveda. *Brātyas* were an uosophisticated class of people who did not perform any elaborate sacrifices which were so common in those days and sought after truth along Nature's own path.

The whole of the 2nd sukta of the 10th kānda in the Atharvaveda is composed in praise of the greatness of mankind. नृसूक्त (A hymn to Mankind) is its name. The 8th sukta of the

11th kānda is again a discussion on man. The 7th sukta of the 10th kānda is known as स्कम्भ or in other words a description of the basic framework of the cosmic universe. There too the principal point that has been elaborated is the greatness of humanity. The argument has been concluded with the following magnificent words :

ये पुरुषे ब्रह्म विदुस्ते विदुः परमेष्ठिनम् ॥ (अथर्व ; १०, ७, १७)
तस्माद्‌ वै विद्वान् पुरुषमिदं ब्रह्मेति मन्यते ॥ (अथर्व ; ११, ८, ३२)

Humanity is the very epitome of the wide and varied universe. To know it properly is to realise the highest manifestation of Brahma, since in all its world-wide aspects humanity is permeated with the spirit of God. This universal greatness of humanity has truly found its triumphant poetic expression in our age in the literature of Rabindranath.

When we hear Rabindranath sing even the glory of the uncivilized savage tribes we are reminded of the Brātyakānda in the Atharvaveda of which a reference has already been made. The Poet sings :

অরুগ্ন বলিষ্ঠ হিংস্র নগ্ন বর্বরতা—
নাহি কোনো ধর্মাধর্ম, নাহি কোনো প্রথা,
নাহি কোনো বাধাবন্ধ, নাহি চিন্তা জ্বর,
নাহি কিছু দ্বিধাদ্বন্দ্ব, নাহি ঘর পর ;
উন্মুক্ত জীবনস্রোত বহে দিনরাত
সম্মুখে আঘাত করি সহিয়া আঘাত
অকাতরে। ... ... (বসুন্ধরা, সোনার তরী)

The sages of the Atharvaveda have, in the same manner, sung in their Brātyakānda the glory of Brātyas or those simple and so-called 'fallen' folk who were initiated to no elaborate religious system. The whole of the 15th kānda in the Atharvaveda is nothing but an elaboration of the ideas and unsophisticated spiritual practices of those Brātyas who refused to observe any hard and fast code or tradition of religion.

When people had lost themselves in the complexities of sacrificial observance and elaborate religious rites, these uneducated and unsophisticated Brātyas preserved in them the primal simplicity and strength of human life. Truly the Earth is the perennial source of life and vitality. Against the sophistry and artificialities of a so-called civilized life the Brātyas, and with them the sages of the Atharvaveda, had maintained a most intimate contact with the soil. That was the sole reason why they were so rich in life—a life instinct with such wide human interest.

It is very interesting to trace even in some of the great Vedic composers this contact with the soil. The composer of the Aitareya Brāhmana —the best of all Brāhmanas in the Rigveda, was the son of a lowly woman (इतरा : Itarā—a sudra) and a veritable child of the soil. According to the current legend he had received his education, a perfect one no doubt, at the hands of the Earth. Hence he received the name *Mahidāsa*—the servant of the Earth.

One of the distinct features of the Aitareya is its expression of the ardent desire for journeying freely on an uninterrupted endless course. As for Rabindranath's poetry one of its keynotes is this restlessness for an onward march. Very early in his boyhood this restless longing had found exquisite expression in the poem *Nirjharer Svapna Bhanga* (The Fountain Awakened from its Dream) in *Prabhāt Sangīt* (Morning Songs). There in another poem *Srōt* (The Stream) his call is :—জগৎ-স্রোতে ভেসে চল, যে যেথা আছ ভাই।

In the *Āhwān Geet* of *Kaḍi O Komal* one feels this same dynamic urge. In *Mānasi*, in the poem *Durānta Āśā*, his soul cries out—কোথাও যদি ছুটিতে পাই বাঁচিয়া যাই তবে... In the poem *Dui Pākhi* (Two Birds) in *Sonār Tarī* the agony of a caged bird that has lost its freedom of flight finds poignant expression. In *Viśva Nritya* (Cosmic Dance) the poet's soul wants to keep its pace with the rhythmic flow of life that runs through beasts, birds and the minutest insects. In that well-known song *Vidāy* (Farewell) of *Kalpanā* he sings in the following strain :

এবার চলিনু তবে
সময় হয়েছে নিকট, এখন বাঁধন ছিঁড়িতে হবে।

In the poem *Bilambita* (Belated) in *Kshanikā* he cannot see any end to the prolonged course of life. *Vidāy Abhiśāp* narrates the pathetic and futile effort of Devajāni to stop the journey of Kacha, the pilgrim eternal. In *Dākghar* (Post Office) the child Amal has heard the call of the road. *Achalāyatan* is a drama that depicts the futility of all attempts to kill the dynamic urge in human life. In *Phālguni* this same urge for progress has found wonderful expression. In the poem no. 21 of *Naivedya* the Poet sings :

ঘরের ঠিকানা হ'ল না গো
মন করে তবু যাই যাই।

In poem No. 36 it is said that through births and rebirths man travels eternally like a pilgrim. Hence in poem No. 84 the Poet earnestly prays—May none of the bonds of the innumerable active duties of worldly life stagnate that steady journey of the human soul. Even in *Kheyā* this feeling of a wayfarer lingers on and in the poem *Pather Śeṣe* the road calls him once again. There, of course, while marching, he dreams of the final meeting with God, his beloved. In his *Utsarga* we hear the poet say :

কেবল তব মুখের পানে চাহিয়া
বাহির হনু তিমির রাতে তরণীখানি বাহিয়া (নং ২)

He further says :

আমি চঞ্চল হে, আমি সুদূরের পিয়াসী (নং ৮)

I am restless. I am athirst for far away things.

It has already been described how he often sails in the same boat with his God (*Gitāñjali* ; No. 84). It is the eternal voyage of a lover for his beloved. The worst tragedy of this voyage is that even here one's little and limited 'self' never leaves him for a single moment (*Gitāñjali* ; No 104).

In *Gītimālya* the Poet sings :

অনেক কালের যাত্রা আমার অনেক দূরের পথে। (নং ২৪)

He expects that his comrades should cheer him when he starts on this journey of pursuit of his love (No. 21). The Poet says :

তুমি জানো ওগো অন্তর্যামী
পথে পথেই মন ফিরালেম আমি। (নং ৫৯)

When the wind strikes favourably on his sail of music his mind is set free on that open path (No. 76). In *Gītali* his soul cries out for this freedom :

দাও ছেড়ে দাও ওগো, আমি
তুফান পেলে বাঁচি। (নং ২৪)

If he ever feels tired and stops short in his journey somewhere on the way then he would ask his God to forgive him (No. 59). Immediately after that he says :

আমার আর হবে না দেরী—
আমি শুনেছি ঐ বাজে তোমার ভেরী। (নং ৬০)

On the boat of his song he has left the shore and has sailed on the limitless ocean (No. 75). His own introduction to the world is that of an eternal wayfarer :—আমি পথিক, পথ আমারি সাথী (নং ৮৩). As he arrives at the end of one road a new road beckons him, as it were (No. 94). He sings forth :

পান্থ তুমি পান্থজনের সখা হে,
পথে চলাই সেই ত তোমায় পাওয়া। (নং ৯৫)

At this stage to walk undaunted is to pay respect to the Lord of the journey :

জীবন-রথের হে সারথি,
আমি নিত্য পথের পথী,
পথে চলার লহ নমস্কার॥ (নং ৯৮)

In *Balākā* the poet has boldly refused to submit to the supremacy of chains, the symbol of bondage :

শিকলদেবীর ঐ যে পূজাবেদী
চিরকাল কি রইবে খাড়া ? (নং ১)

The poem No. 3 is nothing but a song of onward march. In the poem No. 8 the poet has a vision that nothing is static in this world and thus creation has the continuous flow of an endless river :

হে বিরাট নদী
অদৃশ্য নিঃশব্দ তব জল
অবিচ্ছিন্ন অবিরল
চলে নিরবধি ।

In the poem No. 18 he says—the moment we cease to move there accumulate heaps of dead matter. Therefore he sings :

ওগো আমি যাত্রী তাই
চিরদিন সম্মুখের পানে চাই ।
. . . .
যাত্রার আনন্দগানে পূর্ণ আজি অনন্ত গগন । (নং ১৮)

His whole life is a voyage towards the unknown ; in that is his greatest joy (No. 30). The sound of the flight of swans (Haṇsa Balākā) quicken within him an urge of speed and lends a motion, as it were, to all that stands still. At the inmost heart of the universe rises the yearning cry :—হেথা নয়, হেথা নয়, আর কোনোখানে. When the days at the harbour of life are over and the anchor of the boat is weighed the helmsman shouts :

তুফানের মাঝখানে
নূতন সমুদ্রতীর পানে
দিতে হবে পাড়ি । (নং ৩৭)

Thus the poetry of Rabindranath is permeated through and through with this note of deep longing for an endless voyage in pursuit of the great unknown, a note which is unique and beyond all compare in the vast literature of the world. Let us, however, quote in this connection the hymn of 'Onward March' in the

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (ऐतरेय ब्राह्मण) with that well-known refrain चरैवेति चरैवेति'.

नाना श्रान्ताय श्रीरस्ति इति रोहित शुश्रुम ।
पापो नृषद्वरो जन इन्द्र इच्चरतः सखा ॥ चरैवेति चरैवेति—

One who is weary of long journey acquires a grace incomparable. However important and great one might be, if he sits idle in this world he is reduced to insignificance. He who walks endlessly has God as his comrade and co-traveller. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

पुष्पिण्यौ चरतो जङ्घे भूष्णुरात्मा फलग्रहिः ।
शेरे ऽस्य सर्वे पाप्मानः श्रमेण प्रपथे हताः ॥ चरैवेति—

A traveller's body blooms in grace and beauty. His soul becomes greater every day. Isn't that life's greatest achievement ? As he marches along the open road his sins are automatically destroyed and they fall dead. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

आस्ते भग आसीनस्योर्ध्वस्तिष्ठति तिष्ठतः ।
शेते निपद्यमानस्य चराति चरतो भगः ॥ चरैवेति—

An idle man's fate sits idle too. When one rises and stands upright his fate also rises and stands up. As he lies down his fate lies down with him. He who marches along has his fate marching with him. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

कलिः शयानो भवति संजिहानस्तु द्वापरः ।
उत्तिष्ठंस्त्रेता भवति कृतं सम्पद्यते चरन् ॥ चरैवेति—

While one sleeps it is Kali-yuga ; when he merely awakes it is Dwāpara ; as he stands up it is Tretā, but the moment he steps onward there is Satya-yuga. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

चरन् वै मधुबिन्दति चरन् स्वादु मुदुम्बरं ।
सूर्यस्य पश्य श्रेमाणं योन तन्द्रयते चरन् ॥ चरैवेति—

To march along is to gain immortality ; marching by itself is the sweetest fruit of the journey. Look at the sun—the ever glorious and eternal traveller, who once having started on its journey has never felt drowsy. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

In this creation, every human soul feels in its deepest

recess the pining call of the Eternity. The sages have thus asked in the Atharvaveda :—

कथं वातो नेलयति कथं न रमते मनः ।
किमापः सत्यं प्रेप्सन्ती नेलयन्ति कदाचन ॥ (१०, ७, ३७)

Why cannot the wind remain still ; why has the human mind no rest ? Why, and in search of what, does the water run out and cannot stop in its flow even for a moment ?

The call of the Eternal is at the heart of the creation and at the same time is all pervasive. He who once responds to that great call throws off with ease all bonds and shackles.

The call of life's greater truths is too strong for petty domestic ties and the sanctions of Society. Those who hear that call very often turn into rebels. In the ancient days many such rebels renounced Society for good and took to the forest. They tried to resolve their differences with the prevailing social order by becoming *sanyāsis* i. e. by renouncing the world. Rabindranath is a rebel too, but he has never even dreamt of renouncing this world. Living in society he will seek the fulfilment of his personality :

বৈরাগ্য সাধনে মুক্তি, সে আমার নয়। (নৈবেদ্য, নং ৭০)

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. (*Gitanjali* No. 73).

Herein he is unique in his conception. He has lived in the heart of the world and has bravely borne all the sufferings and agonies of worldly life. This experience lends fire to the voice that he raises in protest against all artificial and invidious social differences :

মুক্ত কর, মুক্ত কর, নিন্দা প্রশংসার
দুশ্ছেদ্য শৃঙ্খল হ'তে। সে কঠিন ভার
যদি খসে যায় তবে মানুষের মাঝে
সহজে ফিরিব আমি সংসারের কাজে,—
তোমারি আদেশ শুধু জয়ী হবে, নাথ॥ (নৈবেদ্য, নং ৮৪)

This revolt signifies an open defiance of authority of all the lesser rulers and the humble submission to the laws of the King of kings. This attitude is comparable to the attitude of a truly chaste woman who for the sake of her honour refuses to owe wife's allegiance to a servant of her husband :

তোমার ন্যায়ের দণ্ড প্রত্যেকের করে
অর্পণ করেছ নিজে, প্রত্যেকের পরে
দিয়েছ শাসন ভার, হে রাজাধিরাজ।
সে গুরু সম্মান তব সে দুরূহ কাজ
নমিয়া তোমারে যেন শিরোধার্য করি
সবিনয়ে, তব কার্যে যেন নাহি ডরি
কভু কারে। (নৈবেদ্য, নং ৭০)

A similar loyalty of man towards God has been proclaimed by Rabindranath with still greater force in the poems No. 54, 55, 56, and 57 of *Naivedya*. In the poem No. 56 he has said :

অপমানে নতশিরে ভয়ে ভীতজন
মিথ্যারে ছাড়িয়া দেয় তব সিংহাসন॥

He has insistently tried to wake his countrymen from their death-like slumber into the realm of eternal truth. In that heaven of ideal that his imagination has conceived :

. . . তুচ্ছ আচারের মরুবালুরাশি
বিচারের স্রোতঃপথ ফেলে নাই গ্রাসি'
পৌরুষেরে করেনি শতধা ; . . . (নৈবেদ্য, ৭২)

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit. (*Gitanjali* No. 35).

Rebels against the petty traditions and customs of society were not rare in ancient days. Besides the opinions of Mahāvir and Buddha similar strong ideas are also found in the Jāvālopaniṣad, Sanyāsopaniṣad and Maitreyī Upaniṣad (c. f. 108 Upaniṣad Nirṇaya Sāgara ; pp. 131, 416, 203).

In his thoughts and ideas Rabindranath belongs to the same class as these spiritual rebels. Against the colour and

caste prejudices and all other deadly ideas that tend to break humanity into fragments Rabindranath has said :

যেথায় থাকে সবার অধম দীনের হ'তে দীন
সেইখানে যে চরণ তোমার রাজে
সবার পিছে, সবার নীচে,
সবহারাদের মাঝে ॥ (গীতাঞ্জলি, নং ১০৭)

Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost. (*Gitanjali* No. 10).

Immediately after that he says :

হে মোর দুর্ভাগা দেশ, যাদের করেছ অপমান,
অপমান হতে হবে তাহাদের সবার সমান ॥ (গীতাঞ্জলি, নং ১০৮)

The Maitreyī Upaniṣad also says almost in similar words :

वर्णाश्रमाचारयुता विमूढ़ा कर्मानुसारेण फलं लभन्ते ।
वर्णादिधर्मं हि परित्यजन्तः स्वानन्दतृप्ताः पुरुषा भवन्ति ॥ (१,१३, पृः २०२)

Those poor creatures who submit themselves to the traditional caste system must suffer the consequences of their action. He is the true man who renounces all petty caste distinctions and leads a blissful life in the joy of his soul.

God spreads His own seat in the midst of the humanity at large. He accompanies them in their rise and fall and their joys and sufferings. One must serve and worship Him there in the proper place of His residence. But we remain ever blind to this fact and seek Him in vain in man-made temples and ideals. The voice of Rabindranath therefore reminds us :

তিনি গেছেন যেথায় মাটি ভেঙে
করছে চাষা চাষ
পাথর ভেঙে কাট্‌ছে যেথায় পথ,
খাটছে বারো মাস । (গীতাঞ্জলি, নং ১১৯)

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with then in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust.... (*Gitanjali* No. 11).

When, instead of serving God there, we sit with our eyes tightly shut in front of lifeless idols made of stones in closed temples he whispers in our ears :

ভজন পূজন সাধন আরাধনা
সমস্ত থাক্ পড়ে'।
রুদ্ধদ্বারে দেবালয়ের কোণে
কেন আছিস ওরে ?
অন্ধকারে লুকিয়ে আপন মনে
কাহারে তুই পূজিস সঙ্গোপনে,
নয়ন মেলে দেখ্ দেখি তুই চেয়ে
দেবতা নাই ঘরে। (গীতাঞ্জলি, নং ১১৯)

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads ! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut ? Open thine eyes and see thy god is not before thee (*Ibid*).

In a painful voice he says similar things in his *Naivedya* :

মনুষ্যত্ব তুচ্ছ করি' যারা সারাবেলা
তোমারে লইয়া শুধু করে পূজা-খেলা
মুগ্ধভাব ভোগে,—সেই বৃদ্ধ শিশুদল
সমস্ত বিশ্বের আজি খেলার পুত্তল। (নৈবেদ্য, ৫০)

Here one is reminded of the words in the Maitreyī Upaniṣad :

पाषाणलोहमणिमृण्मयविग्रहेषु
पूजा पुनर्जननभोगकरी मुमुक्षोः।
तस्मात् यतिः स्वहृदयार्चनमेव कुर्यात्
बाह्यार्चनं परिहरेदपुनर्भवाय॥ (२, २६)

If you truly desire *Mukti* then why worship idols made of stone, metal, jewels and earth ? A true *sādhaka* renounces all external paraphernalia and worships God in the quiet recess of his heart.

Rabindranath thus bears a very close relationship with the seers of ancient India who gave utterance to the greatest truths that they had realised in their own life. Needless to say, it will be a futile effort to try to trace out in his literature the thoughts

and ideas that are contained in those ancient Shāstras which deal with narrow traditions and thoughts of ancient times. Those Shāstras suffer from want of a wider vision of life and waste their words on threadbare analysis and unintelligible discussions on trifling matters. Rabindranath has very well said :

ওদের কথায় ধাঁদা লাগে
তোমার কথা আমি বুঝি,
তোমার আকাশ তোমার বাতাস
এই তো সবি সোজাসুজি ॥ (গীতিমাল্য নং, ৭৩)

Thus for the truths of life Rabindranath has relied upon the Vedas and the Shāstras that he has himself realised within his soul, and in this he ranks with the great prophets of the world who have been born age after age.

In the **इतिहासोपनिषत्** it has been said :

ऋचो ह यो वेद स वेद देवान् यजूंषि यो वेद स वेद यज्ञम् ।
सामानि यो वेद स वेद सर्वं यो मानसं वेद स वेद ब्रह्म ॥

(Adyar—*Unpublished Upaniṣads* ; page 11)

If you have studied Rigveda then the utmost that you may have known is about the gods ; if you have studied Yajurveda then you have learnt the details of all sacrificial rites : if you have studied Sāmveda then you perhaps have known everything else that is external, but if you have mastered the Veda of your inner mind, "Mānasa Veda", only then you have realised the *Brahma*.

Rabindranath is a follower of this "Mānasa Veda," and thus he spiritually belongs to one family with those seekers after truth who in ancient India had followed and realised this Veda of their inner mind. This is why in Rabindranath's literature one so often meets with ancient ideas and truths which seem to have taken there a new birth in our own age.[1]

1 Translated from the original Bengali by Nirmal Chandra Chatterjee.



A TAGORE CHRONICLE

1861—1941

Introduction

We are grateful to Sj. Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee whose labours have made possible the following chronological summary of the Poet's life, as also the bibliographies appended thereto. Mr. Mukherjee is the author of a two-volume biography in Bengali of the Poet. As, however, that biography was published some years back and does not deal with the last ten years of Rabindranath's life, he has had to undertake considerable extra labour to make it up to date, as well as to revise and verify some of the previously published data, for the sake of this Special Number. We are also thankful for the help we have received from Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis's "A Tagore Chronicle; 1861-1931" published in the *Golden Book* of Tagore, and from Mr. Amal Home's excellent treatment of the theme published in the recent Tagore Birthday Special Supplement of the *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*.

We have tried to avoid loading the Chronicle with too many details of the Poet's extraordinarily rich and varied activities spread over four-score years, and have confined ourselves to such main events as are likely to indicate the development of his career or are of special public interest. For fuller details the readers are referred to the various books written on the Poet, given in one of the appended bibliographies.

The Editor

GENEALOGY

DWARKANATH TAGORE (1794—1846)

- **DEBENDRANATH** (1817—1905)
  - A daughter who died in infancy.
  - Dwijendranath (1840—1926)
  - Satyendranath (1842—1923)
  - Hemendranath (1844—1884)
  - Birendranath (1845—1915)
  - Saudamini (1847—1920)
  - Jyotirindranath (1848—1925)
  - Sukumari (1849—1864)
  - Punyendranath (1850—1851)
  - Saratkumari (1855—1920)
  - Swarnakumari (1858—1932)
  - Barnakumari (Born 1858)
  - Somendranath (1860—1923)
  - **RABINDRANATH** (Born 1861)
    - Madhurilata (1886—1918)
    - Rathindranath (Born 1888)
    - Renuka (1890—1904)
    - Mira (Born 1892)
      - Nitindranath (1911—1932)
      - Nandita (Born 1917)
    - Samindranath (1894—1907)
  - Budhendranath (1863—1864)
- Girindranath (1820—1854)
  - Ganendranath (1841—1869)
  - Gunendranath (1847—1881)
    - Gaganendranath (1867—1938)
    - Samarendranath (Born 1870)
    - Abanindranath (Born 1871)
- Nagendranath (1829—1858)

TAGORE CHRONICLE

EIGHTY YEARS IN RETROSPECT

1861 Rabindranath Tagore born in Calcutta at the ancestral house of the Tagores[1] at 6 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, on Tuesday, 7 May, between the hours of 2·30 and 3 a.m. (Bengali Era 25 *Vaisākh* 1268). Fourteenth child of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore(1817-1905) and Sm. Sarada Devi (1824-1875).

শ্রীযুক্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর
জন্ম—১৭৮৩ শক। ২৫শে বৈশাখ
১২৬৮ সাল। ঐ
১৮৬১ খৃষ্টাব্দ। ৭ই মে
প্রভাতে ২-৩৮-৩৭ সেকেণ্ড গতে জন্ম।
১৭৮৩।০।২৪।৫৩

ম ৫
র ১
বু ২
শু ২
লং
চাঁ ২৭
কে ৭
বৃ ৯
রা ২১

• কৃষ্ণপক্ষ ত্রয়োদশী সোমবার রেবতী মীন
শুক্রের দশা ভোগ্য ১৪।৩।১১।৩৯

Entry regarding the Poet's birth reproduced from the Family Book.

1863 Maharshi Debendranath buys about six acres of land near Bolpur —the present site of Santiniketan.

1869-70 (age 8-9) Rabindranath admitted to the Oriental Seminary, which he leaves after a few months to join the Calcutta Normal School. School teaching reinforced at home under private tutors. Also practises wrestling and gymnastics.[2] Begins to compose verses.

1871-72 (age 9-10) Admitted to the Bengal Academy, an Anglo-Indian school, but begins to play the truant.

1873 (age 12) *Upanayana* or the sacred thread ceremony performed on 6 February. Pays his first visit to Santiniketan with his father. Composes a drama *Prithvirāja Parājaya* (The Defeat of Prithviraj), the manuscript of which is lost. Leaves with his father on a North India tour, staying in Amritsar (where he accompanies his father to services in the Golden Temple of the Sikhs) and at Dalhousie for four months. Receives regular lessons from his father in Sanskrit, English and rudiments of Astronomy.

1. The Tagores belong to the Sandilya *gotra* (clan) of the Raḍhiya branch of Brahmins. In the eighth century they are supposed to have settled in Raḍha, which means the right bank of the Ganges in Bengal. They are also known as *Pirāli* Brahmins, owing perhaps to some incident the details of which cannot now be traced, which associated them, in the eyes of their orthodox co-religionists, with the Muslim rulers of those times.

1874 (age 13) Returns to Calcutta and is admitted to St. Xavier's School. Study under private tutors continued at home. About this time he translates Macbeth into Bengali (a portion of which is later published in the Bengali monthly *Bhārati*).

1875 (age 14) Recites a poem composed by himself on the occasion of the Hindu Mela (a patriotic gathering held annually in Calcutta), which is later published in the then bilingual *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 25 February.

Death of mother on 8 March.

1876 (age 15) Contributes serially his first long narrative poem, *Banaphūl*[3] (Wild Flower) in eight cantos to *Jnānankur*, a Bengali monthly.

1877 (age 16) Composes and recites at the Hindu Mela a poem satirising the Delhi Durbar held by Lord Lytton on 1 January, while a severe famine ravaged the country. Makes his first appearance [4] on the stage in the character of Alik Babu in a comedy of that name written by his brother Jyotirindranath and privately staged at the Jorasanko residence. *Bhārati*, a new Bengali monthly, is started in July under the editorship of his eldest brother Dwijendranath. Rabindranath contributes several poems, some under the pen-name of Bhānusiṃha Thākur, several essays in literary criticism, a long story, *Bhikhārini* (The Beggar Maid), and an unfinished novel, *Karuna*, and a long poem *Kabi Kāhini* (A Poet's Story). Essays on such subjects as "English Manners", "The Anglo-Saxons and their Literature", and "Beatrice and Dante" show his early study of and interest in foreign peoples and their culture.

1878 (age 17) Goes to Ahmedabad to stay with his elder brother Satyendranath Tagore, I. C. S. (the first Indian member of that service).

Towards the end of the seventeenth century they are supposed to have left Jessore for Gobindapore (a village on the site of the present Fort William in Calcutta) where they acquired the honorific appellation of "Thakur" (meaning Respected Lord, a term of address for Brahmins), which later came to be Europeanised as Tagoure and then Tagore. One Jayaram Thakur amassed considerable fortune under the patronage of the East India Company. His son Nilmani acquired the site of the present Jorasanko house. His grandson was Dwarkanath Tagore, known as Prince Dwarkanath, because of his great wealth and magnificent ways of living. The Tagore Estates were acquired by him. He was one of the first Indians to go to England, where he died in 1846. The Poet's father Debendranath Tagore was the eldest son of Prince Dwarkanath. He came to be known as Maharshi because of his great religious insight and spiritual attainments.

2. For an excellent account of his boyhood days see *Chhele-belā*—pub. 1940 : Eng. tr. *My Boyhood Days.*

3. *V* (Sanskrit व) is pronounced in Bengali as *b*.

4. He is supposed to have appeared earlier in an opera, *Mānamayī*, by Jyotirindranath, but the exact date of its performance cannot be traced.

First musical compositions. First visit to Europe (September 1878 to March 1880). Sails[5] with Satyendranath for England on 20 September by S. S. *Poona.* Joins school in Brighton, where he stays with his sister-in-law, Mrs. Satyendranath Tagore and her children Surendranath and Indira. Later admitted to the University College, London, where he studies English Literature under Prof. Henry Morley (brother of Lord Morley). Also studies European music. Attends a session of the House of Commons to hear Gladstone and Bright ; is a frequent visitor to the British Museum.

1879 (age 18) Rabindranath contributes to *Bhārati* a series of letters, *Yurōp-prabāsir Patra* (Letters of a Sojourner in Europe). Begins writing a verse-drama *Bhagna-hriday* (The Broken Heart).

1880 (age 19) Returns to India in March without completing any course of study.

1881 (age 20) Composes his first musical drama *Bālmiki Pratibhā* (The Genius of Vālmiki). The play was staged in February, Rabindranath taking the part of Vālmiki.

Condemns the opium trade in China in an article in *Bhārati*, entitled *Chine Maraner Byabasā* (The traffic of death in China). First appearance as a public speaker in May, at the lecture theatre, Calcutta Medical College, the subject being "Music and Feeling", with vocal demonstrations. Leaves for England to join the Bar with Satyaprasad Ganguly (his nephew) and Asutosh Chaudhury (later a Judge of the Calcutta High Court) but returns from Madras. Proceeds to Mussoorie to see his father, returns and stays with his brother Jyotirindranath at Chandernagore. Writes the poems of *Sandhyā Sangīt* (Evening Songs), and continues musical compositions. Begins in *Bhārati* his first extant novel, *Bou-Thākurānīr Hāt* (The Young Queen's Market). Publishes a historical drama in blank verse *Rudra Chanda* (June)—dedicated to Jyotirindranath (composed before his departure on the abortive visit to England).

1882 (age 21) Lives in Calcutta, at 10 Sudder Street, near the Indian Museum. Finishes the novel *Bou-Thākurānīr Hāt*. Publishes in December a new musical drama *Kāl Mrigayā* (The Fatal Hunt), based on the legend of King Dasarath killing the son of blind ascetic parents. The drama was staged, Rabindranath taking the leading role. It was at 10 Sudder Street that the Vision came to him, while standing one morning on the balcony of his house, which revealed to him this world in a new light and made the commonplace significant, (described by him in *My Reminiscences* and in the *Religion of Man*) and inspired

5. Before sailing he stayed for some time with a Bombay family. See *Chhele-belā* (*My Boyhood Days*).

the famous poem *Nirjharer Svapna-bhanga* (Awakening of the Fountain), of his new book of poems *Prabhāt Sangīt* (The Morning Songs).[6] Takes a leading part with Jyotirindranath in an attempt to establish a literary society called *Sarasvat Samāj*.

1883 (age 22) Sojourn in Karwar (Bombay Presidency). Writes the poetic drama *Prakṛtir Pratisodh* (Nature's Revenge, Eng. tr. *Sannyāsī*). Poems of *Chhabi O Gān* (Sketches and Songs) appear in *Bhārati*. Writes a number of essays criticising the futile and merely verbal political agitation of those days.

Marries Mrinalini Devi, 9 December.

1884 (age 23) Death of his sister-in-law Jyotirindranath's wife on 20 May. As the Poet was deeply attached to her, her death affects him as the first great sorrow of his life. Poems of *Kaḍi O Kōmal* (Sharps and Flats), with translations from Shelley, Mrs. Browning, Ernest Myers, Aubrey De Vere, Victor Hugo, and others. Rabindranath is made the Secretary of the Ādi Brāhmo Samāj. Enters into a controversy with the famous Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee over the neo-Hindu movement. Writes a prose drama *Nalinī*. Publishes *Bhānusiṃha Thākurer Padāvalī* (Poems written in Brajabhāṣā in imitation of mediaeval Vaishnava poets) and *Śaiśab Sangīt* (Songs of Childhood). Both the books dedicated to Kadambari Devi, Jyotirindranath's wife.

1885 (age 24) Publishes an essay on Raja Rammohan Roy in *Bhārati*. A Bengali Monthly, *Bālaka* (The Boy), started under the editorship of Mrs. Satyendranath Tagore. Rabindranath contributes to it in one year 12 poems, 20 articles on various topics, 9 letters on social questions, 8 humorous sketches in dramatic form, 1 long story *Mukut* (The Crown) and a serial novel *Rājarshi* (The Saintly King). Edits jointly with his friend Srish Chandra Mazumdar an anthology of Vaishnava lyrics ; publishes *Ālochanā*, a collection of reviews and essays on various topics. *Rabi-chhāyā*, the first collection of his songs, is published by a friend. Spends a few months in Bandra and Sholapur with Satyendranath.

1886 (age 25) His first child, daughter, Madhurilata (Bela) born, 22 February. At the second session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta (December, Dadabhai Naoroji presiding), Rabindranath composes and sings the opening song : *Āmrā milechhi āj māyer dāke* (Assembled are we to-day at the call of the Mother).

1887 (age 26) Writes a paper on the Philosophy of Leisure, *Ālasya O Sāhitya*. Poems of *Mānasi* being composed. Publishes *Chithi-Patra*

6. See also the article on the Faith & Philosophy of Rabindranath by S. N. Dasgupta in the present Number.

(July), a series of imaginary letters between a grandfather of an old type and his modernised grandson. Reads a paper on the ideals of Hindu marriage in which he opposes the early marriage system (October). Also publishes *Samālochanā*, a series of critical essays on various subjects which originally appeared in *Bhārati*.

Trust Deed of Santiniketan made by the Maharshi.

1888 (age 27) Composes at the request of Mrs. P. K. Roy a musical drama *Māyār Khelā* (Sport of Illusion).[7] Rabindranath goes with family to Ghazipur (April), where he continues the poems of *Mānasi*, marked by a distinct note of originality and vigour both in theme and in technique.

His eldest son Rathindranath born on 27 November.

1889 (age 28) *Rājā O Rāni* (The King and the Queen) is written and staged, Rabindranath appearing in the role of King Bikram.

1890 (age 29) Writes the famous play *Bisarjan* (Sacrifice), which is staged at the family residence at Jorasanko, the Poet taking the part of *Raghupati*.[8] Rabindranath takes charge of the management of the Tagore Estates. Spends some time at Santiniketan in the early summer. Composes the poem, *Meghdūt* (Cloud-Messenger) after Kalidasa's famous classic of that name. Sails for England with Satyendranath and Loken Palit on 23 August. Visits Italy, France and England. Returns on 8 November. Goes to live at Shelidah, the headquarters of the Tagore Estates. Comes in close contact with the people and their affairs.

Second daughter Renuka born on 31 January.

1891 (age 30) Publishes *Yurōp Jātrir Dāyāri* (The Diary of a Traveller in Europe). Writes several short stories, notably "The Postmaster" for *Hitabādi*, a Bengali Weekly. Starts a new Bengali Monthly *Sādhanā* (December) and contributes several poems, stories, essays, reviews, political articles, etc.

The Mandir (Temple) at Santiniketan constructed and formally opened in December (Bengali Era 7 Pous 1298).

1892 (age 31) Publishes a drama in blank verse, *Chitrāngadā* (Eng. tr. *Chitrā*) in September, illustrated by Abanindranath Tagore, to whom the book is dedicated. Spends the summer at Santiniketan. His first criticism of modern educational system in an article in *Sādhanā*, entitled *Sikshār Her-pher* (The Tortuosities of Education)—a vigorous and reasoned plea for the acceptance of the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction.

7. The play was staged under the auspices of Sakhi Samiti (a ladies club started by the Poet's elder sister, Swarnakumari Devi) and the proceeds made over to the Club.

8. See the photograph in the present Number.

Poems of *Sonār Tarī* (The Golden Barge—Eng. tr. of some poems in *The Fugitive* and *The Gardener*).

His third and youngest daughter Mira is born on 12 January.

1893 (age 32) The Poet spends some time in Orissa in connection with Estate work. Visits Khandagiri, Bhuvaneswar and Puri. Contributes regularly to *Sādhanā* and *Bhārati*. In October reads a paper on *Ingrāj O Bhāratbāsi* (The Englishman and Indians) at a meeting of the Chaitanya Library, with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in the chair.

1894 (age 33) Publishes in *Sādhanā* a paper on *Ingrājer Ātaṃka* (The Englishman's Fear) in which he warns his countrymen against the danger of neglecting the value of Hindu-Muslim unity. In February, while at Kaligram, composes the dramatic poem *Bidāy Abhiśāp* (The Curse at Farewell). In May reads a paper on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee under the auspices of the Chaitanya Library. Collects folk-rhymes and nursery songs and draws the attention of the public to this branch of folk literature. Introduces by his appreciative reviews the poet D. L. Roy to the literary public of Calcutta. Begins in December the series of brilliant dialogues on life and art in *Bhārati*, entitled *Pancha Bhūter Dāyāry* (Diary of the Five Elements).

Samindra, his youngest son, is born in November.

1895 (age 34) By way of encouraging his nephews Surendranath and Balendranath in their swadeshi enterprises (a shop for *swadeshi* cloth in Calcutta and a jute-pressing factory in Kushtia) the poet enters into business partnership with them. Writes a series of short stories, beginning with *Kshudita Pāshān* (Hungry Stones).

1896 (age 35) Composes the poems of *Chitrā* (not to be confused with English *Chitra* which is a drama), *Nadi* (The River) and *Chaitālī* (The Last Harvest). The poem *Jibandebatā* (The Muse of Life), which has been the subject of so much controversy, is of this period. Proceeds to Orissa on Estate business. Partition of the Tagore Estates between Maharshi Debendranath and his nephews. Composes during the Orissa tour *Mālinī*, a lyrical drama, and is busy revising the text of a collected edition of his poetical works, known as Kabyagranthāvali and published by Satyaprasad Ganguly.

1897 (age 36) Writes the humorous comedy, *Baikunther Khātā* (The Manuscript of Baikuntha) and appears in the role of Kedār in a stage presentation of it. Attends the Bengal Provincial Conference at Natore, presided over by his brother Satyendranath. Makes a valiant but unsuccessful attempt to have the proceedings of the Conference conducted in Bengali, instead of in English. Returning from Natore, is engaged in writing a



THE POET'S WIFE MRINALINI DEBI

1901 (age 40) Revives Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's journal *Bangadarśan* and edits it for five years. Contributes serially the novel *Chokher Bāli* (The Eyesore). Composes the poems of *Naibedya* (Offerings), instinct with deep spiritual idealism and wisdom.[9]

Marriage of the second daughter Renuka to Satyendranath Bhattacharya, a medical graduate.

Rabindranath comes and lives at Santiniketan with family. Founds the school which formally opens as Brahmacharyāsrama on the 7th *Pous*, 22 December. The Poet himself teaches the boys, shares their life and activities. The first teachers to work under him in the School were Jagadananda Roy, William Lawrence, Rewachand (a Sindhi who became later Swami Animananda and established a well-known school in a Calcutta suburb) and Pandit Shivadhan Vidyarnava. They were later on joined by Haricharan Banerjee, Brahmabandhava Upadhyaya and the poet Satish Chandra Roy.

1902 (age 41) Rabindranath passes through severe financial difficulties, has to sell his house at Puri, while his wife cheerfully parts with her jewellery to help him meet the business liabilities as well as the current expenses of the School which then accepted no fees from the students. Publishes in his journal *Bangadarśan* a trenchant retort to Lord Curzon's attack (in the course of the latter's Convocation Address at the Calcutta University on 15 February) on the character of the oriental peoples. His wife falls seriously ill and is taken to Calcutta where she dies on 23 November. The Poet enshrines her memory in a series of deeply moving poems *Smaran* (In Memoriam).

1903 (age 42) The sudden illness of his second daughter, Renuka, necessitates her removal to Hazaribagh, then to Almora, where the poet composes the poems of *Śiśu* (lit. The Child. English translations of some poems in *The Crescent Moon*) to entertain his youngest son Samindra. Returns to Santiniketan to attend to some important business but hurries back to Almora on receipt of a wire announcing his daughter's condition to be serious ; has to walk all the way from Kathgodam as no conveyance was available, brings Renuka to Calcutta, where she passes away in May, six months after her mother's death. Contributes serially to *Bangadarśan (*1903 May—1905 July) the novel *Naukā Dubi* (The Wreck).

1904 (age 43) The gifted poet Satish Roy dies of smallpox at Santiniketan in February. The school is removed temporarily to Shelidah. Prof. Mohit Chandra Sen edits *Kābyagrantha*, the second edition of Rabindranath's

9. The aged Maharshi to whom his son read out the manuscript was greatly pleased and gave him, with his blessings, a purse towards the expenses of its publication.

collected poetical works in nine volumes. The Poet's growing interest in political problems finds expression in such essays as *Rājkutumba* (Relatives of the King), *Ghusā-ghusi* (Blow for blow) *Dharmabodher Dṛstānta* (Examples of Righteousness). Reads a paper on *Dharma Prachār* (Religious Propaganda) at the (old) City College Hall. Writes and edits a number of text-books for the use of his School. Sells to *Hitabādi* the right of publishing his works in a limited edition (*Rabindra-Granthābali*). Advocates constructive nationalism in a paper on *Swadeshi Samāj* (National Society) read at the Minerva Theatre (22 July) with Romesh Chandra Dutt in the Chair. Outlines a comprehensive programme for the reorganisation of rural Bengal on the basis of self-help and the revival of cottage industries. Supports vigorously the movement for honouring the memory of Sivaji. Writes the famous poem *Sivaji Utsab* and reads it at the Calcutta Town Hall. Writes in *Bangabhāshār Lekhak* (Writers in Bengali Language,— published by Bangabasi Press, 14 September) an autobiographical article which later evokes considerable controversy.

1905 (age 44) Maharshi Debendranath dies in Calcutta on 19 January 1905 (6 *Magh* 1311 B. S.).

The Poet's eldest brother Dwijendranath comes to live at Santiniketan.

The Poet edits a new monthly *Bhāndār* ; creates in its pages a forum for the discussion of the leading political and economic problems of the day ; contributes to it a paper on *Rājā-Prajā* in which he exposes the imperialist policy of economic exploitation of India. Visits Agartala at the invitation of the Tripura Literary Conference ; reads a paper on *Deshiya Rajya*, appealing to the rulers of the Indian States to encourage and patronise indigenous arts and crafts. Actively helps Count Okakura and Sister Nivedita in the founding of the new Bengal School of Art sponsored by E.B. Havell and Abanindranath Tagore.

Consequent on Lord Curzon's decision to bisect the province, a storm of Anti-partition Agitation sweeps over Bengal. Rabindranath takes an effective part and advocates a policy of Constructive Non-cooperation ; reads a paper on *Abasthā O Byabasthā*, (The Situation and the Solution) at the Town Hall on 25 August ; composes many patriotic songs and addresses public meetings. Acting as the high priest of Indian Nationalism, initiates the *Rākhi-bandhan* ceremony, as a symbol of the undying unity of Bengal, and heads a huge procession through the city, singing his new patriotic song : *Bidhir bāndhan kātbe tumi eman saktimān* [10] ; appeals at a crowded public meeting for a

10. "Are you so mighty as to cut asunder the bond forged by Providence ?" See the facsimile of the MS. reproduced in this Number.

National Fund, where Rs. 50,000 is raised on the spot. Addresses large gatherings of students and protests at many public meetings against the Bengal Government's Circular forbidding students to attend political meetings or to sing the *Bande Mātaram* on pain of rustication.

1906 (age 45) Sends his eldest son Rathindranath and Santosh Mazumdar (son of his old friend Sris Chandra Mazumdar) to the U. S. A. to study Agriculture. D. L. Roy's unjustified attacks on Rabindranath's writings as "obscene" and "immoral". The latter ignores them. Publishes the Poems of *Kheyā* (Crossing) dedicated to Jagadish Chandra Bose. Presides over the First Bengal Literary Conference at Cossimbazar. Draws up a scheme of work for the newly founded National Council of Education ; delivers a course of lectures on Literature under its auspices.

1907 (age 46) Feels increasing dissatisfaction with the character the political agitation was assuming,[11] its narrow political aims, its disregard of the wider perspective of social regeneration and enlightenment, the growing alienation between Hindus and Muslims ; and retires to Santiniketan, more or less withdrawing from active political activity. Explains his view-point in an article in *Prabasi*, entitled *Byādhi-O-Tāhār-Pratikār* (The Disease and Its Cure), in which he advocates a radical social programme as essential to the attainment of a real and lasting political independence. Is severely criticised by his contemporaries. The Poet devotes himself to literary work and enters on one of the richest and most significant phases of his creative activity. Begins his novel *Gora* and contributes it serially to *Prabasi*. Is busy over a new collected edition of his prose works, the proceeds of which are made over to the School at Santiniketan. Publishes in August his famous poem *Arabinda, Rabindrer laho namaskār* (Aurobinda ! Accept Rabindra's salutations !) addressed to the great Indian patriot and revolutionary who was then being prosecuted for sedition.

Marriage of his youngest daughter Mira to Nagendranath Ganguly.

Death of his youngest son, Samindra, from cholera at Monghyr in November.

1908 (age 47) Presides over the Bengal Provincial Conference, Pabna, where he calls upon the young men of Bengal to form bands of workers and dedicate themselves to constructive work in villages and to the building up of Hindu-Muslim unity. Reads a paper (25 May) on *Path-O-Pātheya* (The Way and the Wherewithal), in which he discusses the terrorist outrage at Muzaffarpur and the discovery of the bomb factory at

11. See the article on the Political Ideals of Rabindranath by Sachin Sen in the present Number.

Manicktolla in Calcutta, resulting in the arrest of Barindra Ghosh and others. While admiring the patriotism of those who staked their life for the cause of their country, and condemning the policy of the British Government which drove such idealism to desperation, the Poet pleads with his countrymen against such reckless and destructive expression of their patriotism.

Sāradotsab (Autumn Festival) staged at Santiniketan, the poet appearing in the role of the Sannyāsi.

1909 (age 48) Writes and publishes the drama *Prāyaschitta* (Atonement) which anticipates the philosophy and technique of Satyagraha or non-violent non-cooperation in the character of Bairagi Dhananjaya. Reads at a public meeting in Calcutta, a paper on *Tapoban*, stating the ideals of the School at Santiniketan. His son Rathindranath returns from America in November. The Poet takes him to the family estates on a boat-tour.

1910 (age 49) The Poet composes the songs of *Gitāñjali*. *Prāyaschitta* is staged at Santiniketan before the autumn holidays, the Poet appearing in the role of Dhananjaya.

Marriage of Rathindranath to Pratima Devi in January.

1911 (age 50) The Poet's fiftieth Birthday is celebrated at Santiniketan. *Rājā* (The King) is staged, the Poet appearing in the role of Thakur-dada. *Jiban Smriti* (Reminiscences) appears serially in *Prabasi*. First English translation of one of his poems by Loken Palit appears in the *Modern Review* under the title, "Fruitless Cry", as well as of one of his short stories.

1912 (age 51) On 12 January the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (Bengal Literary Academy) celebrates the Poet's jubilee and presents him with an Address at the Town Hall, where he is received with "unparalleled ovation". The famous national song, *Jana gana mana* is composed.[12] Reads a paper on *Bhāratbarser Itihāser Dhārā*[13] at the Overtoun Hall on 16 March. Writes the prose drama, *Achalāyatan* (The Castle of Conservatism), in which he ridicules the pretensions of die-hard orthodoxy. (The play provokes violent criticism from the orthodox.) Lecture on the proposed Hindu University. Writes the drama *Dāk-ghar* (The Post-Office). The Poet is deeply hurt at a confidential circular issued by the Governments of East Bengal and Assam that the School at Santiniketan was "altogether unsuitable for the education of the sons of Government servants". Projected

12 It is first sung by the Poet himself on the occasion of the Brahmo Festival of Maghotsava in January.

13 Translated as "My Interpretation of Indian History" by (Sir) Jadunath Sarkar in *Modern Review*, August and September 1913.

visit to Europe postponed owing to illness. Translates some poems into English during convalescence (to be later published as *Gitānjali* in England).

Third Foreign Tour (May 1912—September 1913). Accompanied by Rathindranath and Pratima Devi, the Poet sails for Europe on 27 May. In London he meets Rothenstein whom he had met before in India, and casually shows him the English translations of some of his poems that he had done during his last convalescence. Rothenstein, greatly impressed, arranges a reading at his house in Hampstead Heath, where W. B. Yeats reads out the poems to a distinguished audience, including Ezra Pound, Alice Meynell, Ernest Rhys, Henry Nevinson, May Sinclair, Charles Treveleyan and others, all of whom are enthusiastic in their admiration. It is at this gathering that Charles Andrews, then a missionary attached to Cambridge Brotherhood, meets the Poet for the first time. The English Weekly, *The Nation*, holds a big party in honour of the Poet where he meets many English writers and intellectuals. The India Society of London publishes a limited edition of *Gitānjali* with an introduction by Yeats and a pencil-sketch of the Poet by Rothenstein. (The MS. of *Gitānjali* was presented by the Poet to Rothenstein.) The book is immediately hailed by the literary world as one of the master-pieces of world's literature.

In September the Poet buys in London from Lt. Col. N. P. Sinha, brother of S. P. Sinha (Lord Sinha) the Surul Kuthi (future centre at Sriniketan of the Rural Reconstruction Department of Visva-Bharati).

On 27 October the Poet sails for the United States. Visits Urbana (Illinois) and then Chicago, where he is the guest of Mrs. Vaugn Moody. Lectures at the Chicago University on the "Ideals of Ancient Civilization of India". Attends the Congress of Races at Rochester where he reads his famous address on "Race Conflict".

1913 (age 52) Delivers a course of lectures at the Harvard University which were later published as *Sādhanā*. Returns to England by the middle of April. Macmillan & Co. publish a popular edition of *Gitānjali*.

Goes to a Nursing Home for an operation. Sails for India on 4 September.

On 13 November is received the news of the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature. A large deputation led by his friends and admirers come to Santiniketan in a special train on 23 November to congratulate him. The Poet chills their enthusiasm by reminding them of those in their midst who had waited so long for foreign recognition before they gave him theirs. On 26 December the Calcutta University confers on him a D. Litt. (Honoris

Causa).[14] Macmillan & Co. publish *The Gardener, The Crescent Moon* and *Chitra.*

1914 (age 53) On 29 January, at a special reception at the Government House, Calcutta, Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal, formally hands over to him the Nobel Prize and Medal.

W. W. Pearson comes to reside at Santiniketan.

C. F. Andrews and Nandalal Bose visit Santiniketan. The Poet holds a public reception in their honour. The drama *Achalāyatan* is staged at Santiniketan, the Poet appearing in the role of Acharya. Contributes regularly and profusely poems, stories, essays, etc. to *Sabuj Patra,* a new literary monthly in Bengali founded and edited by Pramathanath Chaudhury. Spends the summer at Ramgarh Hills. On return moves about in different places, Allahabad (where he composes the famous poem "Shahjahan"), Agra, Darjeeling, Shelidah, etc.

Macmillan & Co. publish *The King of the Dark Chamber, The Post Office* and *Sādhana.*

1915 (age 54) The students and staff of the Phoenix School (started by Gandhiji in Transvaal) come to reside at Santiniketan. Gandhiji and Mrs. Gandhi visit Santiniketan on 17 February, but miss the Poet who returns from his tour five days later. Gandhiji re-visits Santiniketan on 6 March when he is welcomed by the Poet. The Poet writes the drama *Phālguni* (later translated into English and published as *The Cycle of Spring*) and reads it out to the boys at Santiniketan on 4 March. The play is staged at Santiniketan, with Rabindranath in the role of the blind *Baul.* Receives Lord and Lady Carmichael at Santiniketan on 20 March. Literary activity continues in full swing. The poems of *Balākā* being composed ; *Chaturanga* (Eng. tr. *The Broken Ties*) and *Ghare-Bāire* (Eng. tr. *The Home and the World*) appear serially in *Sabuj Patra.* On 3 June the King Emperor confers on him a Knighthood. Spends the summer in Kashmir with Rathindranath, Pratima Devi and the poet Satyendranath Dutt. While in Srinagar, contributes, at the request of the Shakespeare Society, to the Shakespeare Tercentenary Commemoration Volume, a sonnet in Bengali on the English poet. On return to Calcutta delivers a public lecture on 10 December at the Rammohun Library on *Sikshār Bāhan* (The Medium of Education) in which he pleads for the adoption of Bengali as the medium of instruction in Bengal.

1916 (55) In January the *Phālguni* is staged at the Jorasanko house in aid of the Bankura Famine Relief, the Poet appearing in the dual role of Kabisekhar and the blind *Baul.* His collected poetical works in

14 The proposal had been made and the decision taken by the University before the news had been received of the Nobel Prize award.

Bengali are published in ten volumes, by Indian Publishing House, Allahabad. Macmillan & Co. publish *Fruit-Gathering* and *Hungry Stones and Other Stories.*

Fourth Foreign Tour (May 1916—March 1917). Sails for Japan on 3 May with Pearson, Andrews and Mukul Dey. Halts for four days at Rangoon where he is given an enthusiastic reception. Reaches Kobe on 29 May. In Japan he stays most of the time at Hokone as the guest of Mr. Hara, to whom he dedicates *Stray Birds.* The Poet is treated with great honour and is feted in public and in private, but after his lectures at the Universities of Tokyo and of Keio Gijiku (later included in his book *Nationalism*) in which he condemns aggressive nationalism and chides Japan for her policy of imperialism in China, the official attitude turns cold and reserved. Leaves for the United States on 25 September with Pearson and Mukul Dey (Andrews returns to India). Continues his lectures on Nationalism at various places, exposing the spirit of violence and imperialist greed inherent in the Nation-State ;[15] is severely criticised by the pro-British and imperialistic section of the American press ; is, however, accorded a very warm reception in Boston. Speaks at the Yale University. (His lectures during this tour on Art, Education, the World of Personality, etc. are later published as *Personality.*)

1917 (age 56) Returns to Japan in January, halting at Honolulu for a day. Reaches India in March. The Vichitra Club at Jorasanko House, started during his absence by his nephews Gaganendranath and Abanindranath and his son Rathindranath, becomes under his auspices the active centre of Calcutta's intellectual, literary and artistic world. The Poet lends the weight of his authority and practice to the literary movement led by Pramathanath Chaudhury to colloquialise the literary tongue. His birthday is celebrated in Calcutta. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj presents him in July with an address, read by Sir Brajendranath Seal. The Poet strongly criticises the Government in a public protest on 16 June at the internment of Mrs. Annie Besant. Reads his famous political paper on *Kartār Ichhay Karma* (As the Master Wills) at the Alfred Theatre, where he also sings his national song *Desha desha nandita kari*, composed at the request of Pandit Malaviya. Warmly supports the candidature of Mrs. Besant (then in internment) for the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress against the opposition of Surendranath Banerjee and the Moderates ; is persuaded to accept the chairmanship of the Reception Committee against the Moderates' candidate. Later resigns the chairman-

15 See the article in the present Number on the Political Ideals of Rabindranath Tagore by Sachin Sen.



DURING THE SIXTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS CALCUTTA 1890

Seated : left to right W. C. Bonnerjee, Pherozshah Mehta

Standing : Nalin Behari Sarkar, Monomohan Ghosh Rabindranath Hemchandra Malik Shelley Bonnerjee

Courtesy Calcutta Municipal Gazette



CLOSING SCENE OF DAK-GHAR (POST OFFICE) 1917

Gaganendra — Rathindra — The Poet — Abanindra

Courtesy: Calcutta Municipal Gazette

ship when the controversy is resolved with the acceptance of Mrs. Besant as the President. The Poet attends the Congress session on the first day, receiving a great ovation, and recites the poem "India's Prayer."[16] The *Dāk-ghar* (Post Office) is staged by the Poet at the Vichitra Club Hall, the audience including Gandhiji, Lokmanya Tilak, Mrs. Besant, Malaviyaji and other eminent personalities. The communal riots in Bihar provoke from his pen the famous political paper on *Chhōtō O Borō* (The Great and the Small).[17]

Macmillan & Co. publish *My Reminiscences*, *Sacrifice and Other Plays*, *The Cycle of Spring*, *Personality*, and *Nationalism.*

1918 (age 57) Receives Mr. E. S. Montague, the then Secretary of State for India, at his house in Calcutta. Returns to Santiniketan and receives Sir Michael Sadler and the members of the Education Commission and places his views on the Medium of Education before them. Pens an allegorical satire on the educational policy fostered in India under the patronage of the Government : *Totākāhini* (later translated as *The Parrot's Training*). Composes the poems of *Palātakā.*

The Poet receives the news on 11 May of Pearson's arrest in China and deportation to England, at the instance of the British authorities, for alleged anti-British activities in America and Japan. Followed by a greater sorrow at the death of his eldest daughter Madhurilata (Bela) in Calcutta on 16 May. The Poet cancels his visit to Darjeeling and returns to Santiniketan and occupies himself with teaching work. The Foundation Stone of Visva-Bharati is laid (on the site of the present tennis court). Macmillan & Co. publish *Lover's Gift & Crossing*, *Mashi and Other Stories.* The Macmillan Company of New York publish *Gitanjali & Fruit-gathering* ; *Stories from Tagore ;* and Thacker, Spink & Co. of Calcutta *The Parrot's Training.*

1919 (age 58) The Poet starts on a tour of South India, visiting Bangalore, Mysore (where he delivers a public lecture on "The Message of the Forest"), Ooty, Coimbatore, Salem, Trichinopoly, Madura and other places. Stays in Madras at Adyar as the guest of Mrs. Annie Besant and addresses the "National University" as its Chancellor. Returns to Calcutta on 14 March and delivers a public lecture in Calcutta at the Empire Theatre on Education. (It was his first lecture in English in Calcutta and it was also the first time when tickets for a lecture were sold in Calcutta).

16 See the reproduction of Gaganendranath's painting of the scene in the present Number.

17 English translation by Surendranath Tagore in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* (Vol. II, Part I, New Series).

Returns to Santiniketan and edits a new monthly, *Santiniketan Patrika.* Is busy writing the prose-sketches of *Lipika.*

The Poet is deeply agitated over the news of the Jallianwallah Bag massacre (13 April) and the Martial Law atrocities in the Punjab which, despite the strictest censorship, trickle down to him. Comes down to Calcutta from Shillong, where he was recuperating his health, and, failing to persuade the political leaders to convene a public meeting of protest at which he agrees to preside, he resolves to take action single-handed and, in a letter to the Viceroy written on 30 May, renounces his Knighthood ; for "the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings."

Returns to Santiniketan and busies himself with educational activities. Visva-Bharati, as a centre of higher studies, begins to function from July, the Poet himself taking classes in literature. In September is staged, *Sāradotsab* with the Poet in the role of the Sannyāsi. Visits Shillong again in October and Sylhet in December.

1920 (age 59) Starts on a tour of western India, accompanied by C. F. Andrews, Kshitimohan Sen and Santosh Mazumdar, visiting Ahmedabad (where he spends a day at the Sabarmati Ashram), Bhavnagar, Limbdi, Baroda, Surat and Bombay. Returns to Calcutta on 3 May.

Fifth European Tour (May 1920—July 1921). Leaves for Europe on 11 May, with Rathindranath and Pratima Devi. In London, Oxford and Cambridge renews old acquaintances and makes new ones ; but is surprised and not a little pained at the "studied aloofness" on the part of several English friends and admirers who had resented his outspoken comments on the character of British rule in India and the renunciation of his Knighthood. Leaves for France, staying in Paris as the guest of M. Albert Kahn ; meets Bergson, Sylvain Levy and other French writers and scholars. Visits the devastated areas of the last Great War. Is invited to Holland where he is warmly received by the Dutch. Lectures at the Hague and Leiden and visits Antwerp and Brussels where he is received in audience by the King of the Belgians. Returns to England from where he sails for the U. S. A. arriving in New York on 28 October. Lectures at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on "The Meeting of the East and West", and in New York at the Carnegie Hall on "The Poet's Religion".

1921 (age 60) Returns to London to find the pro-British and imperialist influence still subtly working against him. Goes to Paris where he meets Romain Rolland ; lectures at the Musée Guimet. Visits Strasbourg where he lectures at the University on "The Message of the Forest" ; Geneva where he speaks on Education at the Rousseau Institute ; Lucerne, Basle and Zurich, where he lectures at the University. Stays with Count Keyserling in Darmstadt and visits Hamburg, then Copenhagen, lecturing at both the Universities. Visits Sweden where he is treated with great honour, is received in audience by the King and is the guest of honour at a banquet given by the Swedish Academy. Comes to Berlin, staying with Hugo Stinnes as his guest. Delivers two lectures at the University where he is received with unprecedented enthusiasm. Visits Munich and lectures at the University. Meets Thomas Mann. Also visits Frankfurt, Vienna and Prague, drawing everywhere huge and enthusiastic audiences. Returns to Bombay on 16 July and comes direct to Santiniketan.

Challenges the current popular feeling in the country in a public lecture in Calcutta (15 August) on *Sikshār Milan* (The Meeting of Cultures) in which he criticises the Non-co-operation Movement which was then at its height. The Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee retorts with a paper on *Sikshār Birōdh* (The Conflict of Cultures). The Poet repeats the challenge in a second public lecture at the Calcutta University Institute (29 Aug.) on *Satyer Āhwān* (The Call of Truth). Gandhiji replies in a famous article in *Young India* entitled "The Great Sentinel". *Barsa-Mangal* (Music Festival of the Rainy Season) which is such a popular annual celebration at Santiniketan now, is first initiated and produced by the Poet at the Jorasanko house in September. On 4 September the Bangiya Sahitya Parisad present him with an address. On the 6th Gandhiji meets the Poet at Jorasanko and discusses with him in private the Non-co-operation movement. On 26 September Pearson returns to Santiniketan after an absence of five years. L. K. Elmhirst comes to Santiniketan to organise the rural reconstruction centre at Sriniketan. On 21 November Prof. S. Levi arrives as the first Visiting Professor from Europe, and helps in the organisation of higher research in Chinese and Tibetan Studies. On 22 December the great savant, Dr. Sir Brajendranath Seal, formally inaugurates Visva-Bharati. The Poet makes over to Visva-Bharati by a trust deed, the land, buildings, library and his other properties at Santiniketan (the interest rights on the entire amount of the Nobel Prize had been already transferred by him as a gift to the School).

Writes the drama *Muktadhārā* (The Waterfall). Macmillan and Co. publish *The Fugitive* and *The Glimpses of Bengal.*

1922 (age 61) On 6 February is inaugurated the Institute of Rural Reconstruction at Sriniketan. On 8 July the Poet presides over the Shelley Centenary meeting in Calcutta. In Septemper *Sāradotsab* is produced at a public theatre in Calcutta, the Poet with members of the staff at Santiniketan appearing on the stage. After the performance the Poet starts on a three-month tour of Southern India and Ceylon, visiting Bombay, Poona, Mysore, Bangalore, Travancore, Cochin, Madras and Colombo, delivering lectures everywhere. Writes the poems of *Śiśu Bholānāth*. Macmillan and Co. publish *Creative Unity*.

His elder brother Satyendranath passes away in December.

1923 (age 62) Visits Sind (Karachi and Hyderabad) and Kathiawar in March—April. Makes a gift by deed to Visva-Bharati of the copyright of his Bengali books published till 1922. Spends the summer in Shillong, where he is engaged in writing the drama *Yakshapuri*, later re-named *Rakta Karabi* (Eng. tr. *Red Oleanders)*. Founds the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, which begins publication from April under his editorship. Appears on the stage in the role of Jayasinha in a performance of *Bisarjan (Sacrifice)* at the Empire Theatre in August. Receives the news of Pearson's death (in a railway accident in Italy on 24 September). In November leaves for a tour of the States in Western India, with Andrews, Kshitimohan Sen and Gour Gopal Ghosh, to collect funds for Visva-Bharati.

1924 (age 63) Delivers a course of lectures at the Calcutta University on Literature. Sixth Foreign Tour (March—July). At the invitation of Liang-Chi-Chao, President of the Universities Lecture Association of China, the Poet leaves for China on 21 March, accompanied by Kshitimohan Sen, Nandalal Bose, L. K. Elmhirst and Dr. Kalidas Nag. In China the Poet is received everywhere with great warmth and affection. The highly westernised Chinese youth, under the influence of Anglo-American propaganda, is at first suspicious of the Poet's ideas, having been misled into imagining him to be an oriental reactionary, against all progress. But after attending some of his lectures (later published as *Talks in China)* and specially after the Poet's meeting with Dr. Hu Hsi, the apostle of Western progress in China, and the latter's publicly expressed admiration for the Poet's mission, they receive his message of cultural unity with enthusiasm and respect. After visiting Shanghai, Nanking, Peking (where he stays a month) he leaves for Tai-Yuan-fu (capital of Shansi) and then for Hongkong. Leaves China on 29 May. After a short visit to Japan, returns to India on 21 July. Writes an open letter to Lord Lytton protesting against the latter's uncalled-for remarks against the women of Bengal. Takes part in a tableaux representation of his play *Arupratan* at the Alfred Theatre, Calcutta.

Seventh Foreign Tour (September 1924—February 1925). On invitation from the Republic of Peru to attend the Centenary Celebrations of its Independence, the Poet sails for South America on 19 September, accompanied by L. K. Elmhirst. Falls ill during the voyage and disembarks at Buones Ayres. Rests at San Isadore as the guest of Madame Victoria Ocampo. Composes the poems of *Purabi*, which he dedicates to his hostess—"Vijaya".

1925 (age 64) Leaves South America on 4 January, arriving at Genoa on the 21st. Visits Venice and Milan (where he gives a discourse on Music) and is received with great honour at both the places. Cuts short his visit owing to illness and returns to India on 17 February. His brother Jyotirindranath dies shortly after. Gandhiji visits the Poet at Santiniketan on 29 May. On the death of C. R. Das on 16 June the Poet writes a short but moving tribute in verse to the memory of the great political leader of Bengal. Contributes, at the request of Count Keyserling, a paper to the latter's *Book of Marriage*. Attends a performance of his play *Chirakumār Sabhā* (adapted from his novel of that name) at the Star Theatre. Is provoked by public criticism to express his views on Gandhiji's cult of the Spinning Wheel in a paper entitled *Swarāj Sādhan* (published in *Sabuj Patra*), stating his reasons for not believing in *Charkha* as the means of attaining Swaraj. Prof. Carlo Formichi arrives as a Visiting Professor from Italy, with a Library of Italian books as a gift from Sig. Mussolini. On 24 November Lord Lytton visits Santiniketan. The Poet presides over the First Indian Philosophical Congress at Calcutta on 18 December.

1926 (age 65) In January attends the All-India Music Conference at Lucknow, where he receives the news of the death of his eldest brother, Dwijendranath. Visits Dacca on 7 February at the invitation of the Dacca University, where he lectures on "The Philosophy of Art." Visits several towns in East Bengal and presides over the anniversary celebrations of the Abhaya Ashram in Comilla on 19 February. After visiting Agartala, where he is received by the Maharaja, returns to Santiniketan. His 65th Birthday is celebrated at Santiniketan. Distinguished representatives from several foreign nations offer him felicitations and gifts. The Maharaja of Porbunder sends a handsome donation for the Kalabhavana (Arts School) at Santiniketan. *Natir Puja* (Worship of the Dancing Girl) is staged on the occasion.

Eighth Foreign Tour (May—December 1926). As invitations were pouring in from Italy and as his previous visit had been cut short by ill-health, the Poet sails for Italy on 15 May. At Naples on 30 May he is received by the chief officials of the city bearing a message from Mussolini welcoming him to Italy as the guest of the Italian Government. In Rome the

Poet is received by Mussolini who greets him with the following remark : "I am an Italian admirer of yours who has read every one of your books translated into the Italian language."[18] The Poet is warmly welcomed by the press and is besieged by enthusiastic admirers. Refuses to be drawn into any discussion about Fascism, saying : "Let me dream that from the fire bath the immortal soul of Italy will come out clothed in quenchless light." On 7 June the Governor of Rome holds a formal reception in his honour in the historic Capitol and conveys to the Poet the greetings of the Eternal City. The British Ambassador arranges a tea at the Embassy, where many distinguished people are invited to meet the Poet. On the following day delivers a public lecture on the "Meaning of Art" under the auspices of Unione Intellectuale Italiana, attended by the Premier, and the leading celebrities of Rome. Attends on the 10th afternoon the Annual Choral Concert of the School Children of Rome.[19] That same evening attends a reception at the University where the Rector presents an address of welcome in front of a crowded audience.[20] Has a long audience with the King on the 11th. The Poet is greatly touched by the simplicity and cordiality with which the King receives him and enquires after his welfare. Attends a performance of *Chitra* in Italian.[21] On the

18. For information regarding the Poet's visit to Italy we have largely drawn on the notes recorded by Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis, who was one of the party—Ed.

19. "The huge Coliseum was one seething mass of human faces. The Choir, which consisted of more than one thousand children, was grouped on a huge wooden gallery. As we entered, the whole audience, numbering perhaps 25 to 30 thousand, rose from their seats and gave such a welcome to the Poet as we shall never forget. The singing was marvellous, more than a thousand voices singing in harmony. At parting the audience rose again and saluted in Roman style. The Poet was visibly touched and raising his arms blessed the children with all his heart . . . ." From P. C. Mahalanobis's Notes.

20. "The crowd was so great near the front entrance that the Poet and the ladies had to be taken in by a back door. There was a tremendous ovation when the Poet stood up on the platform and throughout his speech there were constant bursts of applause and cheers. But the climax of the demonstration was reached, when at the request of a student, the Poet put on the academic cap of the University. The long galleries outside the Hall were filled with students, and a huge crowd was standing in the immense courtyard below to catch a glimpse of the Poet as he passed . . . ." *Ibid.*

21. "There was a large and distinguished audience who gave the Poet a great ovation on his arrival. The stage and general get-up was very pleasing, and, although we could not understand the language, we followed the movements of the actors with great interest. The interpretation given by the Italian actors differed materially from our own conception. Chitra was excited all the time, and was full of tragic feeling from beginning to the end. Arjuna was more placid, and tried to add a mystic touch. The audience appeared to like the play very much, and the Poet had to stand up and lean over his box to receive their applause . . . ." *Ibid.*

13th, just before his departure from Rome, the Poet had another long interview with the Duce.[22] The Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, who was away from Rome, comes over, "travelling all night" to meet the Poet.[23] Leaves for Florence on the 14th. In an interview given just before his departure from Rome, he says : "I am not really competent to judge what the Italians think and wish. I hope they will realise that the mere pursuit of material wealth will never make them great. They will be a great world power only when they give the world permanent gifts of the spirit."[24] In Florence the Poet visits the famous galleries and other sights of the city. On the 16th the Leonardo da Vinci Society gives a public reception in his honour ; on the following day the Poet reads his paper on "My School" at the University. Leaves [25] for Turin where on 19 June a reception is given in his honour by the Societa Pro-Cultura Femminile. On the 20th the Poet delivers a lecture on "The City and the Village" at the Liceo Musicale, where after the lecture Signora Lipovetzka gives three songs of the Poet in the Italian version which were received with great applause by the audience.[26] The Poet also recites in Bengali two of his lyrics. On the 21st a reception is held at the University where Prof. Bertoni welcomes

22. "The Poet told us that as an artist he had been deeply impressed by the personality of Mussolini. 'An extraordinarily powerful face with a massive head ; the lower portion is pleasant, very human and even tender ; a kindly smile which makes his speech peculiarly attractive, and reveals the many contradictions in his character ; evidently possesses a genuine love for culture'." *Ibid.*

23. "Croce : 'You do not know how much I admire your poetry. Not only for what it impresses, but for its sober form, as we Italians call it, classical form. This is quite different from our ideas of oriental poetry which we usually think of as steeped in fancy' . . . ." *Ibid.*

24. "Most of the people whom we met in Rome were enthusiastic about Mussolini and Fascism ; but as the Poet himself told a reporter, being a State guest, it was difficult to come into contact with the general public . . . ." *Ibid.*

25. "Before departure Prof. Pavolini (Professor of Sanskrit) presents him with a Sanskrit quatrain composed for the occasion :

पुष्पपुरमिति ख्यातं
श्रुत्वा वाक्यामृतं गुरोः ।
एष्यत्यभिनवां संज्ञां
फलपुरमतः परम् ॥

'The City of Flowers, as it was known before, will henceforth be known as the City of Fruits having heard the *amrita* of the words of the *Guru.*' . . ." *Ibid.*

26. "We could recognise the melodies of '*He mor e debata, bharia e deha prān*', '*Āmi chinigo chini tomāre ōgō bideshini*', and '*Jodi tōr dāk sune keu nā āse*' . . ." *Ibid.*

the Poet on behalf of the authorities. The strenuous programme in Italy tells on the Poet's health and he decides to rest for a few days at Villeneuve in Switzerland from where pressing invitations had come from Romain Rolland.[27] Arrives in Montreux on 22 June and reaches by car Villeneuve where he stays at Hotel Byrone "in the very room in which Victor Hugo had lived for a long time, overlooking the Lake, with the Castle of Chillon in the background." Is warmly welcomed by Romain Rolland, "who lived in an adjoining house and came twice or thrice a day and spent long hours with the Poet in quiet talks. They spoke about art, music, literature, the culture of Europe and the East, eagerly seeking for new points of contact between the two civilizations. Mahatma Gandhi, the non-co-operation movement, the ideal of non-violence—all these naturally came in for detailed discussion . . . . Rolland was very much disturbed by the reports then being broadcast about the Poet's supposed views about Fascism, and spoke to him about the seriousness of the whole situation. At the same time the poet was made acquainted with the translations from Italian papers which we had brought from Italy. He was considerably upset and immediately started writing about his experiences in Italy. He explained that 'being ignorant of Italian the only precaution I could take was to repeat emphatically to all my listeners that I had no opportunity yet to study the history and character of Fascism.' He reiterated his views on Imperialism. 'I have said it over and over again that the aggressive spirit of Nationalism and Imperialism,—religions cultivated by most nations of the West—is a menace to the whole world.' " At Villeneuve the Poet also meets George Duhamel, Sir James Frazer (author of *The Golden Bough*), and Prof. Forel. Arrives in Zurich on 6 July, where he gives a public lecture and recitations from his poems. In Zurich he meets Signora Salvadori (wife of a distinguished Italian Professor in exile) who gives him first hand information about the fascist atrocities witnessed by herself.[28] The poet is shocked and writes a strong letter to the *Manchester Guardian* condemning the regime which sanctions the perpetration of such atrocities. The Italian

27. "After leaving Rome we gradually became aware of the fact that a definite attempt was being made to create an impression that the Poet had grown enthusiastic about Fascism. Just before our departure from Turin we therefore managed to secure authentic translations of some of the reports in the Italian press. On the whole, our impression was that although a part of the demonstrations in Rome might have been organised under Fascist influence, there could be no doubt about the sincerity or the depth of the sentiments of love and adoration aroused in the public mind by the Poet's visit." *Ibid.*

28. An account of the interview was published in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* Oct. 1926,

press is furious and reviles him in strong terms. After a day's stay in Lucerne, where he had accepted an invitation to speak, arrives in Vienna on 10 July. Meets Dr. Angelica Balbanoff, the well-known socialist leader, who brings with him Sg. Modigliani, the advocate in the Matteoti Trial, who aquaints the Poet with further tales against the Fascist regime in Italy. In August the Poet comes to England from where he proceeds to Norway. In Oslo he is received in audience by the King of Norway ; in Stockholm he meets Nansen, Sven Hedin, Bjornson, Bojer and other intellectuals. After visiting Copenhagen and Hamburg, arrives in Berlin on 11 September, where he lectures on "Indian Philosophy" at the Philharmonic Hall. Is received by President Hindenburg on the 14th. Visits Dresden, Cologne, Prague, Belgrade, Sofia (where he is received by King Boris), Bukharest (where he is received by King Ferdinand), Athens and Cairo, his presence attracting huge audiences everywhere. During his short stay in Athens the King of Greece confers on him the Order of the Star. In Cairo, a meeting of the Egyptian Parliament is adjourned in his honour. Returns to Santiniketan on 19 December.

1927 (age 66) *Natir Puja* (Worship of the Dancing Girl) is staged in Calcutta on 24 January, the Poet appearing on the stage. In March he produces at Santiniketan a new dance-drama, *Natarāja*. At the invitation of the Maharaja, visits Bharatpur, where he presides over the Hindi Literary Conference ; visits Jaipur, Agra and Ahmedabad. Returns to Santiniketan on 11 April. In May goes to Chandernagore to lay the Foundation Stone of the Prayer Hall of the Prabartak Sangha. Stays in Shillong for some days, writing the novel *Tīn Purus* (Three Generations), later renamed as *Jogajōg*.

Ninth Foreign Tour (July—October 1927). Leaves Calcutta on 12 July, accompanied by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Surendranath Kar and Dhiren Dev Burman. Visits Singapore (where he stays for one week and speaks at several functions), Malacca, Penang, arriving in Batavia on 22 August ; reads at a banquet given in his honour the English rendering of his poem on Java, *Bijayalakshmi*, written on the voyage.[29] Leaves for Bali on the 26th, stopping for a few hours at Sourabaya to attend a reception given in his honour. After spending two weeks in Bali, returns to Central Java, the Vorstenlanden or the Land of the two Princes, of Soerakarta and of Djokjakarta. Spends a few days at both the places as the guest of Their Highnesses ; witnesses the exquisite court-dances and dramatic performances for which the places are famous and comes into contact with some of the most prominent intellectuals of the land, both Dutch and Javanese ; gives a

29. The poem was translated into Javanese and greatly appreciated. His poem on Boro-budur was also translated both in Javanese and in Dutch.

lecture on "How India sought to solve the problem of the race-conflict". On invitation from Siam (Thailand) leaves for Bangkok, arriving on 8 October and is received there "by a record crowd of Siamese, Chinese, Indians and Europeans." Is warmly received by the King. Delivers a lecture on the Ideals of National Education. Returns to Calcutta on 27 October. In December produces on the stage *Rituranga* (revised version of *Natarāja*) in Calcutta. Macmillan & Co. publish *Fire-flies* and *Letters to a Friend*.

1928 (age 67) Visits Adyar in May where he stays as the guest of Mrs. Annie Besant ; meets Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry ; visits Ceylon. Stops at Bangalore on his way back, where he finishes his novel *Sesher Kabitā* (The Last Poem).[30] Returns to Santiniketan at the end of June. Attends in August the Centenary celebrations of the Brahmo Samāj in Calcutta and reads a paper on "The Message of Rammohun Roy." Receives Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, at Santiniketan on 27 January.

Writes and publishes the poems of *Mahua*.

1929 (age 68) Tenth Foreign Tour (February—July 1929). At the invitation of the National Council of Education of Canada, to attend its Triennial Conference, the Poet sails from Bombay on 1 March, accompanied by Apurba Kumar Chanda and Sudhindra Dutt. Stays for two days in Tokyo and arrives at Vancouver on 6 April. Delivers a lecture at the Conference on "The Philosophy of Leisure."[31] Leaves for the United States at the invitation of the Harvard, Columbia and several other Universities. Arrives at Los Angeles and experiences difficulties owing to the loss of his passport. Resents the treatment accorded to him by the Emigration Officers and, cancelling all engagements as a protest,[32] returns to Japan. After a round of engagements in Japan, leaves for India, breaking journey on the way in Indo-China, where he is received with great warmth by the French Government and the people. Returns to Calcutta on 5 July.

30. For English translation of the first two chapters, see the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. V Part II, New Series.

31. "Tagore is a terrific figure," wrote Clifford Dowling in the *Daily Province*, Vancouver, 11 April. "There was nothing of mysticism in his address the other evening and his dealings were with reality in the realest sense of the word. It is common criticism on the street that he talked over nine-tenths of his audience's head. So he did, but what of it? If he had talked so that the nine-tenths of his audience had understood him, the common criticism would have been, and justly enough,—that he had nothing to say that was worth saying, that he had spoken nothing that had not been spoken before."

32. "It was not a question of personal grievance or of ill-treatment from some particular officer. I felt the insult was directed towards all Asiatics and I made up my mind to leave a country where there was no welcome for ourselves." The Poet in an interview to a representative of *The Japan Advertiser*.

Recasts his old drama *Rājā O Rānī* as *Tapati* which is staged at the Jorasanko residence in Calcutta, the Poet appearing in the role of King Bikram. Mr. Takagaki, a well-known exponent of jiu-jitsu comes to Santiniketan, at the Poet's invitation, to teach his art to the students.

1930 (age 69) About this time the Poet takes seriously to painting.[33] Visits Baroda in January, at the invitation of the Gaekwar, and lectures there on "Man the Artist".

Eleventh Foreign Tour (March 1930—January 1931). Leaves Calcutta on 2 March, accompanied by Rathindranath, Pratima Devi and W. Ariam (his Private Secretary). Arrives in Marseilles via Colombo on the 26th, and stays at Cap Martin near Monte Carlo as the guest of M. Kahn; here he meets President Masaryk of Czechoslovakia. Comes to Paris where on 2 May an Exhibition of his Paintings is opened at the Galerie Pigalle (the Exhibition was arranged by Madame Victoria Ocampo, his hostess in Argentina, who was in Paris then). The Paintings are highly praised by French art critics. Arrives in London on 11 May and proceeds to Birmingham where he stays at the Friends Settlement at Selly Oak. Delivers an address at the George Cadbury Memorial Hall on "Civilization and Progress". On receipt of the news from India of Gandhiji's arrest, the repression in Bengal, Martial Law at Sholapur, the Viceregal Ordinances, etc., the Poet is greatly disturbed and, in an interview with the *Manchester Guardian*, condemns the repressive and short-sighted policy of the British Government in India. At Oxford delivers the Hibbert Lectures[34] (later published by Allen & Unwin as *Religion of Man*). Visits Elmhirst's education colony at Dartington Hall, in Devonshire, and leaves for Germany, arriving in Berlin on 11 July. Meets Einstein. Attends an Exhibition of his Paintings at Gallery Mollor on 16 July ; visits Dresden, then Munich, where a civic reception is accorded to him at the Town Hall. Witnesses the "Passion Play" at Oberammergau ; visits Denmark, where an Exhibition of his Paintings is opened in Copenhagen on 9 August. Leaves for the U. S. S. R.,[35] accompanied

33. See the two articles on his Drawings in the present Number.

34. Prof. L. P. Jack, introducing the speaker at the first Hibbert Lecture at Manchester College, said :

"There are some who have taught us that the space which separates East from West on the surface of the world had no existence in the depths of the human spirit. There is none to whom our debt is greater for that lesson, our gratitude more heartfelt, than to the thinker, poet and philosopher who will speak to you . . . Never has this college been more honoured in its guest than it is today, and never have we been happier in the welcome we offer him." —*Manchester Guardian*, 20 May, 1930.

35. In 1926 he had received an invitation from the Soviet Government, but was taken seriously ill with influenza at Vienna and therefore had to postpone the visit. On this occasion he was invited personally by Lunacharsky who came to see him in Berlin on behalf of the Soviet Government.

by Dr. Harry Timbres, the Poet's grand-nephew Soumyendranath Tagore, Amiya Chakravarty and Ariam Williams. Arrives in Moscow on 11 September and is accorded a reception on the following day in VOKS Building, where he is welcomed by Prof. F. N. Petroff, President of the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. On the evening of the same day a concert is arranged in his honour jointly by the VOKS and the Moscow Association of Writers at the Club House of the Association,[86] where he meets Prof. Kogan (President of the Academy of Arts), Prof. Pinkevitch (Director of the Second Moscow State University), Madame Litvinov, Ognyed, Vera Inber, Fedor Gladkov (the author of *Cement*), Eseev and other writers and artists. On 14 September the Poet visits the first Pioneer Commune (where a young pioneer girl of fourteen reads a message of welcome.[87] The Poet gives a short reply and answers the questions put to him by his young audience, and, at their request, sings his song *Jana gana mana*. On the 16th he visits the Central Peasants' House where he has a talk with the peasants and answers their questions. On the 17th an Exhibition of his Paintings is opened at the State Moscow Museum of New Western Art.[88] Attends the performances of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* at the First Moscow Arts Theatre and of *Peter the Great* at the Second Moscow Arts Theatre, and of *Baiderka* (an Indian love legend) at the First State Opera House. Meets students and answers their questions and tells them about his own school at Santiniketan. Visits the Industrial Labourers' Commune, the Central Ethnographical State Museums, the Children's Crèche and Kindergarten of the Dynamo Works, the Museum of Handicrafts, the Museum of Revolution, and several other Institutions. On the 24th the Poet delivers his farewell speech at a public meeting arranged in the Central House of Trade Unions, in course of which he expresses his admiration for the Soviet experiments. "The little that I have seen has convinced me of the marvellous progress that has been made, the miracle that has been

86. Where Prof. Petroff welcomed him with the words : "Representatives of Soviet public life, art and science see among them today Rabindranath Tagore, one of the greatest of living poets and thinkers."

87. See the photograph in the present Number.

88. Prof. Kristy, the Director of the Tretiakov Gallery, in welcoming the Poet said : "We are sincerely grateful for what we have just seen. When we came here we knew Rabindranath Tagore merely as a great philosopher and a poet and supposed that for him art would be merely the hobby of a great man. But the more we acquaint ourselves with his paintings, the more we are struck with the creative skill shown in his pictures. We consider these works to be a great manifestation of artistic life, and that his methods will be, like all high technical achievements assimilated by us from abroad, of the greatest use to our country."



achieved. . . and I dream of the time when it will be possible for that ancient land of Aryan civilization also to enjoy a great boon of education and equal opportunities for all the people. I am thankful, truly thankful, to you all who have helped me in visualising in a concrete form the dream which I have been carrying for a long time in my mind, the dream of emancipating the people's minds which have been shackled for ages." At this meeting the Soviet poet Shingalee recites the Ode to Rabindranath Tagore specially composed for the occasion and the author Galperin recites in Russian three pieces of Tagore's poems and the actor Simonov gives selections from the *Post Office*.

On September 25 the Poet leaves Moscow, and after resting for three or four days as the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Mendel at Wannsee in Berlin, sails for the U. S. A. on 3 October, where in New York on 25 November a great public banquet is given in his honour by 400 leading citizens. On 1 December the Discussion Guild and the Indian Society of America hold a reception in his honour at the Carnegie Hall. Is received by President Hoover in Washington. Exhibitions of his Paintings are opened at Boston and New York. Returns to England on 22 December.

1931 (age 70) Leaves for India in January. Writes a new dance-drama, *Nabin*, which is staged first at Santiniketan, then in Calcutta, at the Empire Theatre on 14 March. His letters from Russia are collected and published as *Rashiar Chithi*. His seventieth birthday is celebrated at Santiniketan and all over India. On 16 May a large gathering representative of all sections of the community meets at the Calcutta University Institute with Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri in the chair, and decides to celebrate the Poet's seventieth birthday in a grand and fitting manner.[39] The Poet visits Bhopal at the invitation of the Nawab. *Śiśu-tirtha*[40] is published. On 30 September the Pandits of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta bestow on him the title of "Kavi-Sarvabhouma". The Poet is greatly disturbed and pained at the news of the outrage at the Hijli Internment Camp where two Bengali political prisoners are shot down in cold blood by their guards. Condemns the outrage at a monster public

39. A Committee is appointed with Sir J. C. Bose as President, J. N. Basu as General Secretary, and Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and Amal Home as Joint Secretaries. This Committee adopts a scheme of celebration, prepared by Amal Home, and decides to celebrate the event by a festival extending over an entire week during Christmas (1931), with a programme including a comprehensive Exhibition illustrating the significant events and activities of the Poet's varied life.

40. The English version *The Child* was also published by George Allen & Unwin in the same year. The English version was written before the Bengali and is perhaps the only poetical composition written by the Poet directly in English.

meeting held at the Calcutta Maidan.[41] Spends the autumn in Darjeeling. Attends his Birthday celebrations (Rabindra Jayanti) in Calcutta in December. Receives on the 27th at the Town Hall Addresses presented by several associations. The *Golden Book of Tagore*, bearing the homage of his friends and admirers all the world over, is presented to him on the occasion. The students of Calcutta also present him with an address at the Senate Hall of the University. On 28, 29 December *Natir Puja* is staged at the Jorasanko house, and on the 30th *Sāpmochan.*

1932 (age 71) The Jayanti celebrations, which were to be continued, are suddenly cut short on 5 January, owing to the news of the arrest of Gandhiji (4 January). The Poet is shocked at Gandhiji's arrest so soon after his return from the Round Table Conference in London. Issues a statement on 26 January which, however, is prevented from being fully published by the Bengal censor. Stays for some time in a riverside-villa at Khardah, where he writes many poems, among them one on Gandhiji entitled *Prasna* (The Question). An exhibition of his paintings is opened at Government Art School, Calcutta. Twelfth Foreign Tour (April—June 1932). At the invitation of His Majesty, Reza Shah Pehlavi, the Poet leaves for Persia by air on 11 April, accompanied by Pratima Devi, Kedarnath Chatterjee and Amiya Chakravarty. On crossing the Persian border, receives in the plane a wireless message from the Persian Government, welcoming him. Is received at Bushire on 13 April by the Governor and entertained at a public banquet. Reaches Shiraz on 16 April where he is accorded a most enthusiastic welcome in "the land of Hafiz and Saadi"; and Ispahan on 22 April where both the Government and Municipality hold receptions in his honour. Spends a fortnight in Teheran where he is overwhelmed with civic receptions and military salutes, the newspapers hailing him as the "greatest star shining in the Eastern sky". Has a long interview with His Majesty Reza Shah Pehlavi on 2 May, to whom the Poet presents a poem written in his honour. On 7 May both the Government and the people join to celebrate his birthday with great magnificence. The Poet is deeply touched at the truly oriental hospitality and grace with which he had been feted during his stay in Teheran and pays a moving tribute to his hosts in his farewell speech. On his way back to India, visits Baghdad where he meets King Feisal of Iraq. Returns to Calcutta by air on 3 June. Accepts the offer of the Calcutta University to deliver the Kamala Lectures; is presented with an address by the University

41. The meeting was originally to be held in the Town Hall, but owing to the unprecedented crowds had to be shifted to the open *maidan* at the foot of the Ochterloney Monument.

at a special Academic Reception on 6 August. Receives the news on 8 August of the death of his only grandson Nitindranath in Germany. Writes at Santiniketan the poems of *Parishesh* (The End), the prose poems of *Punascha* (Postscript) and the drama *Kāler Jātrā* (The March of Time). Is much perturbed at the news of Gandhiji's "fast unto death" in Yeravda Jail over the Communal Award. Sends him a telegram.[42] Himself proceeds to Poona to see Gandhiji, where he is present in Yeravda Jail when Gandhiji breaks the fast. Receives Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at Santiniketan on 2 December. Presides on the 11th at the Seventieth Birthday Celebration of Sir P. C. Ray at Calcutta and dedicates to him the pamphlet *Mahatmaji & Depressed Humanity*.

1933 (age 72) Poure Davoud is sent by the Shah of Persia as a Visiting Professor to Visva-Bharati. On 18 January the Poet presides at the inaugural meeting of the Rammohun Roy Centenary in Calcutta. In March *Sāpmochan*, a dance-drama, is staged again at the Empire Theatre in Calcutta. In September the performance of two new dramas, *Tāsher Desh* (The Kingdom of Cards) and *Chandālika*[43] are given in Calcutta, the latter play being read out by the Poet on the stage. Writes the poems of *Bichitrita* and dedicates the book to Nandalal Bose. Visits Bombay with Santiniketan party in November. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu personally looks after arrangements for his stay and his programme in Bombay. An exhibition of his paintings and of paintings by Santiniketan artists is opened. The Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University entertains him at a dinner. Delivers a public lecture at the Regal Theatre on "The Challenge of Judgment" ; attends on 29 November a garden party given in his honour by the Young Men's Parsi Association ; speaks at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall on 1 December on "The Price of Freedom" ; on the 2nd attends party given by the Indian Merchants' Chamber. Attends performances of *Sāpmochan* and *Tāsher Desh* staged by Santiniketan artistes. Leaves for Waltair on the 3rd and is the guest of the Andhra University, where he delivers Sir A. Krishnaswami Aiyer Lectures (published later as

42. "It is worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity. Though we cannot anticipate what effect it may have upon our rulers who may not understand its immense importance for our people, we feel certain that the supreme appeal of such self-offering to the conscience of our own countrymen will not be in vain. I fervently hope that we will not callously allow such national tragedy to reach its extreme length. Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance with reverence and love." Rabindranath Tagore.

43. For English translation of both the plays see the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. IV, Part IV & Vol. III, Part IV, resp.

Man) ; spends a day at Vizianagram as the guest of the Dowager Maharani ; proceeds to Hyderabad Deccan, at the invitation of the State. On the day of his arrival the Osmania University organises a garden party, where he delivers his lecture, "Message to Youth". Attends on the following day a State Banquet given in his honour by the Prime Minister. Returns to Calcutta in December where on the 29th he speaks at the Senate House on the occasion of the Rammohun Centenary celebrations ; also addresses the All India Women's Conference at the Town Hall. Three dramas, *Chandālika*, *Tāsher Desh*, *Bānsari* and a novel *Mālancha* are written and published during the year.

1934 (age 73) Receives Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his wife Kamala Devi on 19 January at Santiniketan, holding a public reception in their honour. In a public statement the Poet deprecates strongly the anti-Gandhi agitation then on foot in Bengal. Sails for Ceylon, with Santiniketan party, on 5 May, reaching Colombo on the 9th. Is entertained on the following day at the Rotary Club from where his talk on Visva-Bharati is broadcast ; on the 11th the Indian Mercantile Chamber of Ceylon present him with an address ; on the 15th the Corporation holds a civic reception in his honour. Attends the performance of *Sāpmochan* by the Santiniketan artistes at the Regal Theatre ; on the 17th gives a recitation of his poems at the Y. M. C. A. Visits Kandy, Anuradhapur, Jaffna and other places. While in Ceylon, writes the novel *Chār Adhyāya* (Four Chapters).[44] Returns to Calcutta, on 23 June. Receives at Santiniketan on 31 August Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, who comes there immediately on release from jail to see his son, a student in the Arts Department. In October the Poet leaves for Madras, where he is welcomed by the Chief Minister, Raja Saheb of Bobbili, on behalf of the citizens of Madras. On 22 October the Corporation of Madras present an address at a civic reception ; on the 24th the Exhibition of his paintings and the paintings of the Santiniketan School of Art is opened at the Congress House. The Poet attends the performances of *Sāpmochan* by the Santiniketan artistes. Their Excellencies Sir George Stanley and Lady Stanley receive the Poet at a garden party at the Government House. Visits Waltair on 2 November as the guest of the Maharani of Vizianagram, and addresses the students of the Andhra University on the 5th. Leaves for Calcutta on the following day. On 29 November the Poet, accompanied by his Private Secretary, Anil Kumar Chanda, leaves for Benares to open the new building of the Rajghat Montessori School.

44. The novel draws its theme from the revolutionary terrorist movement in Bengal. An English translation appeared in *Asia*.

1935 (age 74) Receives Sir John Anderson, Governor of Bengal, at Santiniketan on 6 February. Leaves on the same afternoon for Benares, where he delivers the Convocation Address at the Hindu University on the 8th. Receives a D. Litt (*Honoris Causa*) of the University. Leaves for Allahabad by car on the following day and addresses the students at the Senate Hall of the University on the 12th ; leaves for Lahore on the 13th and addresses the Punjab Students' Conference on the 15th : gives a recitation of his poems at the Y. M. C. A. on the following day ; meets leaders of the Sikh community who call on him, and visits the Gurdwara ; arrives in Lucknow on the 28th, and addresses the students at the University on 1 and 2 March. Returns to Santiniketan on 4 March. His 75th birthday is celebrated at Santiniketan. On 12 May the Bangiya Sahitya Parisad hold a reception in his honour. Spends the summer at Chandernagore, mostly in a house boat. Returns to Santiniketan on 4 July. His nephew Dinendranath dies in Calcutta on 21 July. In October *Sāradotsab* is staged at Santiniketan, with the Poet in the role of the Sannyāsi. In November the Japanese poet Yone Noguchi visits Santiniketan and is welcomed by the Poet at a public reception. In December *Rājā* (*Arupratan* version) is staged in Calcutta, with the Poet in the role of Thakurdada. Writes and publishes *Bithikā*, a book of poems. On 27 December sends a message of felicitations to the President, Indian National Congress, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Congress.

1936 (age 75) Leaves for Calcutta on 7 February where during the "Education Week" he delivers at the Senate Hall a lecture in Bengali on Education ; returns to Santiniketan on the 14th and is busy preparing a new version of *Chitrāngadā* as a dance-drama, which is produced in Calcutta at the New Empire Theatre in March, the Poet being present on the stage. Leaves for Patna on 15 March,and is received at Patna station next morning by large crowds headed by Babu Rajendra Prasad. On the 17th an address of welcome and a purse are presented to him by the citizens of Patna. Visits Allahabad, Lahore and Delhi. In Delhi Gandhiji and Kasturi Bai come to see him on the evening of 25 March. Gandhiji is much perturbed that the Poet should have to undertake arduous tours to collect funds for Visva-Bharati, and at his instance the Poet is presented with a cheque for Rs. 60,000/- by an anonymous donor. The Delhi Municipality votes a civic address to the Poet which is, however, vetoed by the Government. The citizens of Delhi hold a public reception in his honour at the Queen's Gardens, where an address is presented to him. Princess Niloufar of Hyderabad (Deccan) entertains him at a luncheon party at the Hyderabad House on the 29th. Motors to Meerut where the Municipality and the

District Board present him with addresses ; returns to Delhi the same evening and gives a recitation of his poems on the radio ; returns to Santiniketan on 2 April. Visits Calcutta to preside over a mass meeting held in the Town Hall on 15 July to protest against the Communal Award. On 29 July the Dacca University confers on him in absence a D. Litt. (*Honoris Causa*). On 5 September he sends a message to the World Peace Congress at Brussells, in course of which he warns the delegates : "We cannot have peace until we deserve it by paying its full price—which is, that the strong must cease to be greedy and the weak must learn to be bold." Gives a discourse at the special service held in the Mandir on the occasion of Gandhiji's birthday on 2 October. Dramatises the poem *Parisodh* and sets it to music. The dance-drama is produced in Calcutta at the Asutosh Hall on 10 & 11 October, the Poet being present on the stage. On the 11th he also attends the sixtieth birthday celebrations of the novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and reads an address of welcome to him. On the 12th he attends a sitting of the Bengal Women Workers' Conference at the Albert Hall and delivers a long extempore speech. Returns to Santiniketan on 13 October.

1937 (age 76) On 17 February delivers the Convocation Address of the Calcutta University, he being the first non-official to do so and it being the first time that the Convocation Address is delivered in Bengali. On 21 February he goes to Chandernagore by boat and addresses the Bengal Literary Conference. On 3 March presides at a sitting of the "Parliament of Religiôns" in Calcutta.[45] Is present at the opening of the Cheena-Bhavana (Chinese Hall) for the promotion of Sino-Indian Studies, at Santiniketan and reads an address on "China and India". Spends the summer at Almora where he is engaged in writing *Visva-Parichaya*, an introduction to science for Bengali readers. On return from Almora in July, spends a few days in a boat on his Estates at Patisar (Rajshahi). The Bharati-tirtha of Andhra confers on him in absence the title of *Kavi-Samrāt*, at a special Convocation held on 24 July. The Poet is busy composing new songs for the Barsamangal Festival which is staged in Calcutta on 4 and 5 September. Returns to Santiniketan, and prepares to leave for Gwalior where he had been invited by the Maharaja when he is suddenly taken seriously ill on 10 September. After some days of grave anxiety the Poet slowly recovers under the care and treatment of Dr. Sir Nilratan Sircar, aided by several other doctors from Calcutta. Is brought to Calcutta on 12 October for further medical treatment ; Gandhiji, Jawaharlal and other Congress

45. For address delivered on the occasion see the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. III Part I.

leaders, who had come to Calcutta to attend a session of the A.I.C.C., call on him. Returns to Santiniketan on 4 November. The A.I.C.C. passes a resolution of thanksgiving on his recovery. Sends a message to the New Education Fellowship Conference in Calcutta in December. Writes a number of poems during convalescence which are later published as *Prāntik*.

1938 (age 77) Receives Lord Lothian at Santiniketan in January ; and in February Lord Brabourne and Lady Brabourne. On 1 March the Osmania University confers a D. Litt. (*Honoris Causa*) on the Poet in absence. Is busy setting the drama *Chandālika* to music ; the dance-drama is staged in Calcutta at the Chhaya Theatre on 18, 19 & 20 March, the Poet attending the last performance. Meets Gandhiji in Calcutta on the 22nd. Spends the summer at Kalimpong and Mungpu, returning to Santiniketan on 5 July. Writes a popular treatise on Bengali language, *Bāngla Bhāsa Parichay*, the poems of *Senjuti* and a humorous drama, *Muktir Upāy* (The Way to Salvation). Addresses the inmates of the Asrama on Gandhiji's Seventieth Birthday.[46] On 9 December Lord Zetland opens an Exhibition of his paintings at the Calmann Gallery, London. The Marchioness of Linlithgow and her daughter the Lady Anne Hope visit the Poet at Santiniketan on 19 December.

1939 (age 78) On 21 January Subhas Chandra Bose, then President of the Indian National Congress, visits Santiniketan and is accorded a public reception by the Poet. On 31 January Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrives in Santiniketan to perform the opening ceremony of the newly constructed Hindi-Bhavana. On 7 February the Poet leaves for Calcutta where he formally inaugurates the Visva-Bharati Sammilani, as a literary and cultural club in Calcutta ; while there, he attends the performances of *Shyāmā* and *Chandālika* ; returns to Santiniketan on 13 February. At the invitation of the Congress Government of Orissa the Poet visits Puri at the end of April ; his birthday is observed with great solemnity, the Premier of Orissa holding a public reception in his honour on 9 May. The Poet spends the summer at Mungpu and Kalimpong returning to Santiniketan on 19 June. On 19 August, at the invitation of Subhas Bose, he lays the foundation stone of the "Mahajati Sadan" in Calcutta ; on the following evening Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on his way to China, meets him at Jorasanko house. Spends the autumn at Mungpu, returning to Santiniketan on 11 November. Visits Midnapore on 15 December and performs the opening ceremony of the Vidyasagar Memorial Hall.

1940 (age 79) Gandhiji and Kasturibai visit Santiniketan on 17

46. "To this great soul in a beggar's garb," said the Poet, "it is our united privilege to offer felicitations on his birthday".

February. On the 18th the Poet holds a formal reception in the Mango Grove to welcome Gandhiji.[47] On 21 February the Poet opens the Annual Industrial Exhibition at Suri ; in March he visits Bankura to perform the opening ceremony of the Bankura Exhibition and to lay the foundation stone of a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre. On 5 April C. F. Andrews passes away at the Riordan Nursing Home in Calcutta.[48] The Poet leaves for Mungpu on 20 April, returning to Santiniketan on 20 June. On 7 August the Oxford University holds a special Convocation at Santiniketan to confer on him a D. Litt (*Honoris Causa*), Sir Maurice Gwyer and Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan being specially deputed by the University to perform the ceremony. On 19 September the Poet leaves for Kalimpong, where he is suddenly taken seriously ill on the 27th. He is brought down to Calcutta, where for several days his condition causes anxiety. In December he returns to Santiniketan, to convalesce. On 9 December he receives H. E. Tai Chi-Tao, President of the Examination Yuan of the Chinese National Government. Though confined to bed the Poet's literary activity continues unabated ; the books published during the year being : *Naba-jātak* (a book of poems), *Sānāi* (a book of poems), *Chhele-belā* (an autobiographical sketch of his boyhood days), *Tīn Sangī* (three long short-stories), *Rog-sajjāy* and *Ārogya* (both books of poems composed during convalescence).

1941 (age 80) On 14 April Santiniketan celebrates the Poet's eightieth birthday. The Poet gives his message in an address, *Sabhyatār Sankat* (The Crisis in Civilization), which is read on the occasion. The address is widely published and commented on in the Indian press. On 8 May his birthday is celebrated all over India. The Maharaja of Tripura confers on him the title of "Bharat Bhaskar" (The Sun of India). Two new books during the year are published on his birthday, *Janma-dīne* (poems) and *Galpa-salpa* (short stories), as well as the English translation of *Chhele-belā* (*My Boyhood Days*). The Poet is still convalescing and is practically confined to bed, though he continues to be active mentally and maintains his literary activity. He is no longer able to hold the pen with ease and has therefore to dictate. **On 7 AUGUST, Thursday noon, the GREAT POET PASSES AWAY.**

47. "Homage to the great," said the Poet, "naturally seeks its manifestation in the language of simplicity and we offer you these few words to let you know that we accept you as our own, as one belonging to all humanity. . ." Gandhiji in course of his reply said, "Even though I call this visit a pilgrimage, allow me to say that I am no stranger here. I feel as if I had come to my home . . . . I have received Gurudev's blessings and my heart is full to the brim with joy. I shall speak no further, because where the relation is one of love, words are of no use."

48. "In no one man have I seen such triumph of Christianity," said the Poet at the memorial service held in the Mandir on 5 April ; "His sacrifice, the complete surrender of self, will ever remain treasured in our hearts "

RABINDRANATH TAGORE[1]

By Ezra Pound

THE appearance of "The Poems of Rabindranath Tagore" is, to my mind, very important. I am by no means sure that I can convince the reader of this importance. For proof I must refer him to the text. He must read it quietly. He would do well to read it aloud, for this apparently simple English translation has been made by a great musician, by a great artist who is familiar with a music subtler than our own.

It is a little over a month since I went to Mr. Yeats' rooms and found him much excited over the advent of a great poet, someone "greater than any of us."

It is hard to tell where to begin.

Bengal is a nation of fifty million people. Superficially it would seem to be beset with phonographs and railways. Beneath this there would seem to subsist a culture not wholly unlike that of twelfth-century Provence.

Mr. Tagore is their great poet and their great musician as well. He has made them their national song, their Marseillaise, if an Oriental nation can be said to have an equivalent to such an anthem. I have heard his "Golden Bengal," with its music, and it is wholly Eastern, yet it has a curious power, a power to move the crowd. It is "minor" and subjective, yet it has all the properties of action.

I name this only in passing, to show that he has sung of all the three things which Dante thought "fitting to be sung of, in the noblest possible manner," to wit, love, war and holiness.

The next resemblance to mediaeval conditions is that "Mr. Tagore" teaches his songs and music to his jongleurs, who sing them throughout Bengal. He can boast with the best of the

1 We are glad to reproduce this article which originally appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* of march 1918. We are thankful to Mr. Amal Home for lending us a copy.—*Ed.*

troubadours, "I made it, the words and the notes." Also, he sings them himself, I know, for I have heard him.

The "forms" of this poetry as they stand in the original Bengali are somewhere between the forms of Provencal canzoni and the rondels and "odes" of the Pleiade. The rhyme arrangements are different, and they have rhymes in four syllables, something, that is, beyond the "leonine."

Their metres are more comparable to the latest development of *vers libre* than to anything else Western.

The language itself is a daughter of Sanscrit. It sounds more like good Greek than any language I know of.

It is an inflected language, and therefore easy to rhyme in. You may couple words together as you do in Greek or German. Mr. Tagore tells me that there is scarcely a poem where you do not make some such word combination.

I write this to show that it is an ideal language for poets ; it is fluid, and the order is flexible, and all this makes for precision. Thus, you may invert in an inflected language, for this will not cause any confusion as to your meaning.

It makes for precision, since you can have a specific word for everything. For example, one of Mr. Tagore's friends was singing to me and translating informally, and he came to a word which a careless lexicographer might have translated simply "scarf,"[1] but no ! It seems they wear a certain kind of scarf in a certain manner, and there is a special name for the little tip that hangs back over the shoulder and catches in the wind. This is the word that was used.

The hundred poems in the present volume are all songs to sing. The tunes and the words are knit together, are made together, and Oriental music would seem to fit this purpose better than our own.

Firstly, because it is unencumbered with a harmony.

Secondly, from the nature of the *ragini*, which are something in the nature of the Greek *modes*.

1. অঞ্চল is obviously meant This and the subsequent footnotes are ours—Ed. *V. B. Q.*

And in these *ragini* there is a magic of association. For certain of these scales are used only for song in the evening, or for song in the rainy season, or at sunrise, so that a Bengali hearing any opening bar knows at once the place and atmosphere of the poem.

For myself I should be apt to find a curious aptness in the correspondence of the *raga* with its own service. At least it lends a curious ritualistic strength to the art. And no separate poem or song can seem a scrap or a disconnected performance, but must seem a part of the whole order of song and of life. It takes a man more quickly from the sense of himself, and brings him into the emotion of "the flowing," of harmonic nature, of orderly calm and sequence.

"I do not know whether there is anything more in it. To us it means a great deal, perhaps it is only association." I quote here the author himself. The evening before he had asked me: "What is it you find in these poems (translated) ? I did not know that they would interest a European."

And stripped of all the formal beauty of the original, of the tune, and of the rhythm, and of the subtle blendings of their rhyme, it is small wonder that Mr. Tagore should be curious as to the effect of what remains in the prose of an alien speech.

I must, from his point of view, have wasted a certain amount of time in my answers, for I began to discuss his art and his manner of presentation, rather than his spirit and context.

The precision of his language remains.

The movement of his prose may escape you if you read it only from print, but read it aloud, a little tentatively, and the delicacy of its rhythm is at once apparent.

I think this good fortune is unconscious. I do not think it is an accident. It is the sort of prose rhythm a man would use after years of word arranging. He would shun kakophony almost unwittingly.

The next easiest things to note are the occasional brilliant phrases, now like some pure Hellenic, in "Morning with the

golden basket in her right hand," now like the last sophistication of De Gourmont or Baudelaire.

But beneath and about it all is this spirit of curious quiet. We have found our new Greece, suddenly. As the sense of balance came back upon Europe in the days before the Renaissance, so it seems to me does this sense of a saner stillness come now to us in the midst of our clangour of mechanisms.

The "mens sana in corpore sano," the ethic of the Odyssey, came then upon the tortured habits of mediaeval thought, and with no greater power for refreshment.

I am not saying this hastily, nor in an emotional flurry, nor from a love of brandishing statement. I have had a month to think it over.

Hearing his first Greek professor, hearing for the first time the curious music of Theocritus, coming for the first time upon that classic composure which Dante had a little suggested in his description of limbo, Boccaccio must have felt, I think, little differently from what we have felt here, we few who have been privileged to receive the work of Mr. Tagore before the public had heard it.

> "This is my delight, to wait and watch at the wayside, where shadow chases light and the rain comes in the wake of the summer."

> "No more noisy, loud words from me. . . . Henceforth I deal in whispers. . . . Full many an hour have I spent in the strife of the good and the evil, but now it is the pleasure of my playmate of the empty days to draw my heart on to him, and I know not why is this sudden call to what useless inconsequence !"

> "In this play-house of infinite forms I have had my play and here have I caught sight of him that is formless."

> "And because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well."

If quotation is an unsatisfactory method still these five passages from as many poems might show a little the tone, and might certainly indicate the underlying unity of this whole series of spiritual lyrics.

It is not now the time to speak of Mr. Tagore's other work which still awaits translation. To find fitting comparison for the content of volume before us I am compelled to one sole book of my acquaintance, the *Paradiso* of Dante.

> Ecco qui crecera li nostri amori.

Dante hears "more than a thousand spirits" singing it as he comes into the fourth heaven. Yet the voice of the Brahma Samaj is different, the mysticism is calm rather than fervid. Such phrases as—

> Poi che furono giocondi della faccia di Dio

would seem likely to break the stillness of this Oriental thought.

Perhaps the vision of the celestial bees "in-flowering themselves in the rose," is nearest the key of Tagore.

There is in him the stillness of nature. The poems do not seem to have been produced by storm or by ignition, but seem to show the normal habit of his mind. He is at one with nature, and finds no contradictions. And this is in sharp contrast with the Western mode, where man must be shown attempting to master nature if we are to have "great drama." It is in contrast to the Hellenic representation of man the sport of the gods, and both in the grip of destiny.

Oddly enough, I wrote some six months ago this passage, anent the introduction of humanism at the time of the Renaissance :

> "Man is concerned with man and forgets the whole and the flowing. And we have in sequence, first the age of drama, and then the age of prose."

And this sort of humanism, having pretty well run its course, it seems to me we have the balance and corrective presented to us in this writing from Bengal.

I cannot prove it. Every true criticism of an important work of art must be a personal confession rather than a demonstration.

"In the deep shadows of the rainy July, with secret steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers.

"To-day the morning has closed its eyes, heedless of the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and a thick veil has been drawn over the ever-wakeful blue sky.

"The woodlands have hushed their songs and doors are all shut at every house. Thou art the solitary wayfarer in this deserted street. Oh my only friend, my best beloved, the gates are open in my house—do not pass by like a dream."

This is one lyric of the hundred as you may have it in English ; remember also what is gone, the form, delicate as a rondel, the music tenuous, restive. Remember the feet of the scansion, the first note struck with an accent and three or four trailing after it, in a measure more than trochaic.

As fast as I select one poem for quotation, I am convinced, in reading the next one, that I have chosen wrongly, and that this next one would have more helped to convince you.

Perhaps simple confession is the best criticism after all. I do not want to confuse Mr. Tagore's personality with his work, and yet the relation between the two is so close that perhaps I may not offend by two statements, which I shall not attempt to explain.

When I leave Mr. Tagore I feel exactly as if I were a barbarian clothed in skins, and carrying a stone war-club, the kind, that is, where the stone is bound into a crotched stick with thongs.

Perhaps you will get some hint of the curious quality of happiness which pervades his poems from the following incident.

Mr. Tagore was seated on a sofa, and just beginning to read to me in Bengali, when our hostess's little girl of three ran into the room, laughing and making a most infernal clatter. Immediately the poet burst into laughter exactly like the child's.

It was startling and it was for a moment uncanny. I don't attempt to explain it.

Was he in some sudden and intimate connection with the child's gaiety, or was it merely some Oriental form of super-courtesy to prevent our hosts from guessing that he noticed an interruption? Was it a simple acknowledgment that the child's mirth was quite as important in the general scheme of things as was our discussion of international aesthetics?

"Thus it is that thy joy in me is so full."

If we take these poems as an expression of Bhuddistic (*sic*) thought, it is quite certain that they will change the prevailing conception of Bhuddism among us. For we usually consider it a sort of ultimate negation, while these poems are full of light, they are full of positive statement. They are far closer in temperament to what we are usually led to call Taoism.

Mr. Tagore has said that our greatest mistake in regard to Oriental religious thought is that we regard it as static, while it is, in reality, constantly changing and developing.

Briefly, I find in these poems a sort of ultimate common sense, a reminder of one thing and of forty things of which we are over likely to lose sight in the confusion of our Western life, in the racket of our cities, in the jabber of manufactured literature, in the vortex of advertisement.

There is the same sort of common sense in the first part of the New Testament, the same happiness in some of the psalms, but these are so apt to be spoiled for us by association; there are so many fools engaged in mispreaching them, that it is pleasant to find their poetic quality in some work which does not bring into the spectrum of our thought John Calvin, the Bishop of London, and the loathly images of cant.

If these poems have a flaw—I do not admit that they have—but if they have a quality that will put them

at a disadvantage with the "general reader," it is that they are too pious.

Yet I have nothing but pity for the reader who is unable to see that their piety is the poetic piety of Dante, and that it is very beautiful.

> "It is he who weaves the web of this *maya* in evanescent hues of gold and silver, blue and green, and lets peep out through its folds his feet, at whose touch I forget myself."

> "On the day when the lotus bloomed, alas, my mind was straying and I knew it not. My basket was empty and the flower remaind unheeded."

> "Now is the time to sit quiet face to face with thee and to sing dedication of life in this silent and overflowing leisure."

Or, again, as he contemplates his departure from this life, in the sequence of the poems 39 to 41 (*sic*),[1] we find the same serenity :

> Wish me good luck, my friends .... We were neighbours for long, but I received more than I could give.

I do not think I have ever undertaken so difficult a problem of criticism, for one can praise most poetry in a series of antitheses. In the work of Mr. Tagore the source of the charm is in the subtle underflow. It is nothing else than his "sense of life." The sort of profound apperception of it which leads Rodin to proclaim that "Energy is Beauty." It is the sort of apperception of it that we find in Swinburne's ballad beginning :—

> "I found in dreams a place of wind and flowers,"

where he says in allegory :

> "Now assuredly I see my lady is perfect, and transfigureth all sin and sorrow and death, making them fair as her own eyelids be."

We have forgotton Swinburne's early work over much. The whole force and drive of his message is concentrated in two early poems, "The Triumph of Time" and in his "Ballad of

1 In Macmillan's *Gitanjali* (1919) the reference should be : poems 90—99.—*Ed.*

Life," which I have quoted. And I think many people have done his memory wrong in remembering his lesser work in place of his greater, in forgetting such strophes as that one where he says :

> "Clear are these things ; the grass and the sand."

This seems a digression, but I am hard put to it to find comparisons for this new work before me. And, besides, it is not a bad place for saying that there is more in Swinburne's work than luxury and decoration. Nothing could be more utterly different than the general atmosphere of Swinburne and the general atmosphere of Tagore, who can say with perfect truth.

> "My song has put off all her adornments. She has no pride of dress and decoration."

But upon this point, also, he is sound ; he understands that a very strict form rigorously applied makes it possible for one to use the very plainest language. This is the greatest value of such complicated form, which is, on the other hand, a very dangerous trap for such authors as use it to hide their own vacuity. . . .

Perhaps the reader is by now sufficiently interested in our author to endure a short and purely technical discussion. If not he may well skip the next few paragraphs.

If you have not heard any of the Bengali singers in London, you must imagine the following measure sung in "high-piping Pehlevi," or, rather, not in Pehlevi, for the Bengali is, as we have said, related to Sanscrit about as Italian is to Latin. And Mr. Tagore was rather distressed when I mentioned Omyr's calm in connection with his own, although he brightened at the name of Whitman and seemed interested in my quotation from Dante. He would have, I think, little use for "Art for Art's sake."

His second song,[1] then, is rhymed as follows :

a, a, (b + b), a, a,

[1] Obviously the reference is to the original Bengali song in *Gitimalya :*

কোলাহল তো বারণ হ'ল
এবার কথা কানে কানে . . .

for the first strophe and in the second.

c, c, (d+d), a, a.

The signs (b+b) and (d+d) indicate that the third and eighth lines have an inner rhyme. The rhymes are (a) *kanè kanè*, which is more than leonine and rhymes with *ganè ganè*, &c.

(b) is *echè*, (c) more than leonine, *iuria*, and (d) is *ète*.

This form is, as you see, bound in cunningly as a rondel, and the rhyme-chords are beautifully modulated.

This is the song beginning,

> "No more noisy, loud words for me. Henceforth I deal in whispers ; the speech of my heart will be carried on in murmurings of a song."

Kanè kanè is literally not "murmurings of a song," it is a colloquial use meaning "from ear to ear." It is Bengali for "whisper," but it is much more pictorial.

The third song[1] is even more interesting in its construction, and is comparable to the first "*pes*" of the strophe in some very elaborate Tuscan canzoni. It is rhymed and measured as follows. We have no equivalent in Greek or English for these feet of five syllables and the reader had better consider them purely as musical bars.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 1
rhyme in *cho*

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 1, 2
rhyme in *tabo*

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 1
rhyme in *cho*

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 1, 2
rhyme in *tabo*

This is followed by three lines of

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 1, 2
rhyming in *tee rè*
(sic *tee rè* and *phirè*).

1 Original Bengali song in *Gitimalya* :—
আমারে তুমি অশেষ ক'রেছো
এমনি লীলা তব . . . .

The third division is the same shape as the first, and rhymes

shè, kani, she, bani.

The fourth division is three lines like those in the second division, and rhymes,

bhari, bari, dari.

This metre is, as I have said, not quantitative as the Greek or Sanscrit measures, but the length of the syllables is considered, and the musical time of the bars is even. The measures are more interesting than any now being used in Europe except those of certain of the most advanced French writers, as, for instance, the arrangements of sound in Remy de Gourmont's "Fleurs de Jadis" or his "Litanies de la Rose."

In fact, this older language has already found that sort of metric which we awhile back predicted or hoped for in English, where all the sorts of recurrence shall be weighed and balanced and co-ordinated. I do not mean to say that the ultimate English metre will be in the least like the Bengali, but it will be equally fluid and equally able to rely on various properties. We will not rhyme in four syllables; we may scarcely rhyme at all; but there will be new melodies and new modulations.

It is interesting for the few who are mad enough to seek fundamental laws in word music to find here a correspondence with Western result, for Sappho could discover nothing better than three lines of eleven syllables relieved by one of five, and Dante, after careful analysis, could recommend nothing more highly than certain lines of eleven syllables relieved by some of seven. Here in the Bengali the use of eleven or twelve is optional in the song last analysed.

For purely selfish reasons I want this book *Gitanjali* to be well received. Mr. Tagore's work does not consist wholly of such songs as these. There are plays and love lyrics still hidden in the original. The task on which he has already set forth is the translation of his children's songs, and I am anxious to see them.

"Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in houses not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger."

Says Mr. Tagore (poem 6),[1] and he might have said it most truly of his own writings, and, indeed, of all great art, for it is only by the arts that strange peoples can come together in any friendly intimacy. By such expression they learn a mutual respect, and there is more marrow in such expression than in much propaganda for economic peace.

Rabindranath Tagore has done well for his nation in these poems. He has well served her Foreign Office.

He has given us a beauty that is distinctly Oriental, and yet it is almost severe, it is free from that lusciousness, that overprofusion which, in so much South-Oriental work, repels us. His work is, above all things, quiet. It is sunny, *Apricus*, "fed with sun," "delighting in sunlight."

One has in reading it a sense of even air, where many Orientals only make us aware of abundant vegetation. I will quote only one more poem, and bid you then go to the book.

" 'I have come to the river,' she said, 'to float my lamp on the stream when the daylight wanes in the west.' I stood alone among tall grasses and watched the timid flame of her lamp uselessly drifting in the tide."

1 Macmillans *Gitanjali* (1919), poem 68—*Ed.*



THE POET AS HE IS TODAY

AN INDIAN MYSTIC[1]

By Evelyn Underhill

"GITANJALI (Song Offerings)." By Rabindranath Tagore.
A collection of Prose Translations made by the Author from the Original Bengali. With an Introduction by W. B. Yeats. (India Society, 10s. 6d net.)

THE poetry of mysticism—the poetry which is inspired by, and seeks to express, the soul's direct vision of reality—is, or should be, the crown of literature, since it claims to fulfil the secret purpose of all art. It is seldom met in its perfection ; for it demands in its creator a rare balance of qualities—a disciplined craftsmanship, an untamed ardour, a fearless and vivid intuition of truth. The mystic poet, in fact, if he would fulfil his high office as revealer of reality, must be at once—and in a supreme degree —an artist, a lover, and a seer.

Genius of this type will always be rare ; but its importance for the spiritual progress of humanity cannot easily be exaggerated. The mystical poets, like the prophets of old, are the "eyes of the race." The theme of their lyrics and odes is not, as some have imagined, a thing strange and remote from us ; but, on the contrary, something so near—so closely interwoven with the stuff of our spirits—that we cannot stand away from it, and see it as it is, without their help. Because they see all things lit up by the Uncreated Light, and perpetually discover in the multiplicity of creation the infinite simplicity of God, they give to us our most sublime and disinterested vision of the world and of life. That vision is not the fluid and indefinite creation of metaphysical sentimentality ; it is actual, practical and poignantly

1. We are glad to reproduce for the interest of our readers this review of the first edition of *Gitānjali* by Evelyn Underhill, the well-known authority on religious mysticism. This review originally appeared in *The Nation* (London) of 16 November 1912. We are thankful to Mr. Amal Home for lending us a copy. *Ed.* V. B. Q.

alive. The width of its sweep is balanced by the direct intimacy of its appeal to the individual soul. It is transfused by that passionate love which is the expression of spirit's instinct for its source and home.

This is the vision, these the qualities which we look for in mystical poetry of the highest class. We find them alike in the writings of the East and the West; in the Sufi Jelaluddin Rumi, in the Franciscan Jacopone da Todi, in the austere, yet passionate Carmelite St. John of the Cross. All these, whatever their formal creed, speak, as Saint Martin said, "the same language, for they come from the same country"—the country which Augustine called "no mere vision, but a home". To their small company another name must now be added—that of the Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore. Only the classics of mystical literature provide a standard by which this handful of "Song Offerings" can be appraised or understood. These hundred-and-three lyrics, here translated by the author into rhythmical prose of singular beauty, pre-suppose as their origin that same personal and first-hand experience of the spiritual order—so changeless and so various, so ineffable and so homely—which is reported to us by the great mystics of every period. Here we find again that total independence of time, that almost complete independence of place, which characterise those same mystics at the height of their development; that same crystalline vision of the "Beauty so old and so new," that same exalted passion for reality. Many a phrase is here which might have been written by the Christian contemplatives—by St. Augustine or by Eckhart, by Mechthild of Magdeburg, or Julian of Norwich—and nothing, perhaps, which these contemplatives would have failed to understand. Hence, for those interested in the spiritual history of man, the continuance in our own day of that living tradition of intercourse with reality which we owe to the mystical saints, the appearance of these poems is an event of great importance. From the point of view of pure literature, their high quality can hardly be contested; yet it is not mere literary excellence which their author has sought, nor

is it here that their deepest interest lies. They are offerings, from finite to infinite—oblations, as their creator holds that all art should be, laid upon the altar of the world.

> "From the words of the poet men take what meanings please them, yet their last meaning points to thee."

Rabindranath Tagore has long been famous in India as a poet of the first rank ; celebrated, not only for his mystical songs, but for the beauty of his dramas, love poems, and patriotic hymns. Mr. Yeats quotes a distinguished Bengali doctor as saying :—

> "We have other poets, but none that are his equal ; we call this the epoch of Rabindranath. No poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us. He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the west of India into Burmah, wherever Bengali is spoken . . . . He is the first among our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of Life itself, and that is why we give him our love."

In these words, "he has spoken out of Life itself", we seem to have the clue to that which is most distinctive in Mr. Tagore's poetry. Coming out of the midst of life, it accepts life in its wholeness as a revelation of the Divine mind. This is not the "Via Negativa" of the Neo-platonists but a positive mysticism, which presses forward to a "more abundant life". The idea of God which informs it, is far from that concept of a static and transcendent Absolute which we have been taught to regard as the centre of Hindu mysticism. The Deity to whom these songs are offered is at once the striving spirit of Creation, and that Creation's eternal source and end ; both infinite and intimate, "dark with excess of light," and yet the friend and lover of each soul.

> "Thou art the sky, and thou art the nest as well."

Since He is in one of His aspects the energetic Spirit of life, active in His own Creation, inhabiting the flux, this God may best be found and worshipped, not in the temple "with

doors all shut", but within the rich and various world of things :—

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil !

"Deliverance ? Where is this deliverance to be found ? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation ; he is bound with us all for ever."

The flux of life, the living, changeful, onward-pressing universe of modern vitalistic thought, is the stuff from which this seer has woven his vision of truth.

"All things rush on, they stop not, they look not behind, no power can hold them back, they rush on."

Yet he sees God in this storm of Becoming, controlling each manifestation of life from greatest to least, pressing all things on and up towards Perfection :—

"Hidden in the heart of things thou art nourishing seeds into sprouts, buds into blossoms, and ripening flowers into fruitfulness."

God, then, is conceived by this mystic as pre-eminently the Creator of life and of beauty ; He is the Divine Minstrel, and all creation is His song. Like Richard Rolle, the English hermit, who called the last state of the transfigured soul the "state of heavenly song", he is driven again and again to musical imagery in the attempt to express his vision of the universe :—

"I know not how thou singest, my Master : I ever listen in silent amazement.

"The light of thy music illumines the world. The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy stream of thy music breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on."

Music has seemed to many of the great contemplatives the least inadequate of all symbols of reality, eluding the snares which lurk in more concrete images. Because they discern

in creation a harmony which is beyond the span of other minds, they have heard, as this last of their descendants, "the harp of the road break out in sweet music of pain", and have felt a special obligation laid upon the poet to add his song to the melodies which fill the universe. St. Francis of Assisi held that the perfect friar should not only pray, but sing; and Catherine of Genoa prized gay music upspringing in the heart as evidence of its union with God. So here the creation of fresh beauty is presented as man's best approach to Perfect Beauty :—

> "I know thou takest pleasure in my singing. I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence.
>
> "I touch by the edge of the far-spreading wing of my song thy feet, which I could never aspire to reach."

As Abt Vogler claimed for the musician a special initiation into the secrets of the universe, so for this poet it is the singer who is admitted to the peculiar intimacy of God. His song-offering is the sacrament of his ineffable communion with the Divine Nature; and it is from this personal and impassioned intercourse—so characteristic of the mystical consciousness—that his loveliest melodies are born.

> "You came down from your throne and stood at my cottage door.
>
> "I was singing all alone in a corner, and the melody caught your ear. You came down and stood at my cottage door.
>
> "Masters are many in your hall, and songs are sung there at all hours. But the simple carol of this novice struck at your love. One plaintive little strain mingled with the great music of the world, and with a flower for a prize you came down and stood at my cottage door."

Yet this personal and secret ecstasy is but one side of the mystic's complete experience; it is balanced by the wide, impersonal consciousness of the eternal Divine immanence in creation, of the incessant and infinitely various self-revelation of God.

> "The steps that I heard in my play-room are the same that are echoing from star to star."

This is the aspect of his vision which the poet offers to his fellow-men ; the "flaming truth" which he is trying to make actual for the race. For him the footsteps of Reality are plainly audible, the light of Reality is everywhere to be seen. It is the supreme business of the artist to heal the eyes that see not, and the ears that cannot hear.

> "Have you not heard his silent steps ? He comes, comes, ever comes.
>
> "Every moment and every age, every day and every night he comes, comes, ever comes.
>
> "Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, 'He comes, comes, ever comes.' "

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography of Rabindranath Tagore's Bengali and English writings, compiled by Sj. Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee, is given in chronological order. The dates refer to their publication in *book form*. As the Bengali publications were originally dated according to the Bengali year, which begins in April, an occasional discrepancy in correspondence is unavoidable wherever the exact month and date of the first publication could not be traced.

In transliterating original Bengali names and titles in roman script, no hard-and-fast rule is followed. We have kept the reader's convenience in mind and have tried to avoid both pedantry and oversimplification. Sanskrit *v* is transliterated as *b*, because it is always pronounced so in Bengali. Diacritical marks have been used only where their absence might mislead the reader. No pretension is made either to correct classical transliteration or to orthodox phonetic transcription. Learned scholars will kindly overlook these shortcomings.

Owing to the exigencies of space, only the barest mention of the nature of the contents has been possible. In has not been possible to compile a separate list of the Poet's magazine contributions, nor of his many *Introductions* and *Prefaces* to books written by others, nor of his contributions to the various Symposiums, such as Keyserling's *Book of Marriage*. The task is well worth the trouble, but is unfortunately beyond the resources of this undertaking. A list of his contributions to Bengali magazines alone, spread over more than six decades of incessant literary activity, would fill a separate volume. We have, however, included a list of his contributions to this Journal and to the *Modern Review*.

THE EDITOR

CHRONOLOGY OF TAGORE'S BENGALI BOOKS

1878 : *Kabi Kāhinī* (narrative verse).

1880 : *Bana-phul* (narrative verse. Written and published serially in journal earlier than *Kabi-Kāhinī*).

1881 : *Bālmiki Pratibhā* (a musical drama).

Bhagna-hṛday (a drama in verse ; dedicated to "Srimati হে . . .")

Rudrachanda (a drama in verse ; dedicated to "Brother Jyotidada", Jyotirindranath Tagore).

Yurop Prabāsir Patra (prose : Letters from a Sojourner in Europe ; dedicated to "Brother Jyotidada").

1882 : *Sandhyā Sangīt* (poems, "mostly written in the course of the last two years").

Kāl-mṛgaya (musical drama).

1883 : *Bau-thākurānir Hāt* (novel : dedicated to Saudamini Devi).

Prabhāt Sangīt (poems, "mostly recent", dedicated to Srimati Indira Devi).

Bibidha Prasanga (prose, miscellaneous topics).

1884 : *Chhabi O Gān* (poems, "mostly written in the course of the last year").

Prakṛtir Pratisodh (a drama in verse).

Nalinī (a prose drama).

Saisab Sangīt (poems).

Bhānusiṃha Thākurer Padābalī (poems, written in Brajabhāsa, mostly published during 1877-1881, under the pen-name "Bhanusiṃha").

1885 : *Rammohun Ray* (prose).

Ālochanā (prose, essays ; dedicated to the Poet's Father).

Rabichhāyā (a collection of songs).

1886 : *Kaḍi O Komal* (poems ; edited by Sir Ashutosh Chaudhuri. Dedicated to Satyendranath Tagore).

1887 : *Rājarshi* (a novel) ; *Chithipatra* (prose, essays).

1888 : *Samālochanā* (essays ; dedicated to Mrs. Satyendranath Tagore).

Māyār Khelā (a musical drama : dedicated to Mrs. P. K. Ray).

1889 : *Rājā O Rāni* (a drama in verse ; dedicated to Dwijendranath Tagore).

1890 : *Bisarjan* (a drama in verse : based on *Rājarshi*. Dedicated to Surendranath Tagore).

Mantri Abhisek (A paper read at a meeting convened to protest against a bill sponsored by Lord Cross).

Mānasi (poems).

1891 : *Yurop Jātrir Dāyari*, Vol. I (Diary of a Traveller in Europe ; Introductory Essay. Dedicated to Lokendranath Palit).

1892 : *Chitrāngadā* (a drama in verse : dedicated to Abanindranath Tagore).

Goḍāy Galad (a prose comedy ; dedicated to Priyanath Sen).

1893 : *Gāner Bahi O Bālmiki-pratibha* (a collection of songs, incorporating *Bālmiki-pratibha*).

Yurop Jātrir Dāyary, Vol. II (dedicated to Lokendranath Palit).

1894 : *Sonār Tarī* (poems : dedicated to Debendranath Sen).

Chhōtō Galpa (short stories : dedicated to Biharilal Gupta).

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Bichitra Galpa, Parts I & II (short stories).

Kathā-Chatustaya (short stories).

1895 : *Galpadasak* (short stories : dedicated to Ashutosh Chaudhuri).

1896 : *Nadi* (a long poem : dedicated to Balendranath Tagore).

Chitrā (poems).

Sanskrita Śikshā Parts I & II.

Kābya Granthābali (collected poems and verse-dramas : incorporating *Mālini*, a drama, and *Chaitāli*, a collection of poems ; these two were now issued for the first time).

1897 : *Baikunṭher Khātā* (a prose comedy).

Panchabhut (essays : dedicated to Maharaja Jagadindranath Ray).

1899 : *Kanikā* (poems : dedicated to Pramathanath Ray Chaudhuri of Santosh).

1900 : *Kathā* (poems : dedicated to Jagadish Chandra Bose).

Brahmopaniṣad (paper read at Santiniketan, December, 1899).

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1901 : *Brahma-mantra* (paper read at Santiniketan, December, 1900).

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1905 : *Swadesh* (patriotic poems).

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1906 : *Ātmasakti* (political essays).

Bhāratbarsha (political essays).

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Sāhitya (essays on literature).

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Hāsya-Kautuk (humorous sketches).

Byanga-Kautuk (humorous sketches).

1908 : *Prajāpatir Nirbandha* (a novel ; revised edition of *Chirakumār Sabhā*).

Sabhāpatir Abhibhāsan (presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Political Conference, Pabna).

Prahasan (*Goḍāy Galad* and *Baikunṭher Khātā* printed in one volume).

Rājā Projā (political essays).

Samuha (political essays).

Swadesh (political essays).

Samāj (essays on social questions).

Kathā O Kāhinī (poems).

Sāradotsab (drama).

Gān (songs).

Śikshā (essays on education).

Mukut (drama, for children).

1909 : *Sabdatattva* (essays on Bengali philology).

Dharma (essays on religion).

Santiniketan I—VIII(sermons).

Ingreji Pāṭh I (text-book).

Śiśu (poems).

Chayanikā (anthology of poems).

Chhutir Parā (text book).

Prāyaschitta (drama, based on *Bau-thākurānir Hāt*).

1910 : *Rājā* (prose drama).

Santiniketan, IX—XI.

Gorā, I & II (novel : dedicated to Rathindranath Tagore).

Gītalipi, I, II, III (songs, with notations by Surendranath Banerjee).

Gitānjali (songs).

1911 : *Santiniketan* Part XII.

Gītalipi, IV—VI.

1912 : *Dāk-ghar* (prose drama).

Dharma-Śikshā (a paper on religious education).

Dharmer Adhikār (a paper on religion).

Santiniketan, XIII.

Atti Galpa (short stories : an anthology for children).

Galpa Chāriti (short stories).

Jibansmṛti (reminiscences).

Chhinnapatra (letters).

Achalāyatan (prose drama : dedicated to Jadunath Sarkar).

Pāṭha-Sanchay (text book).

1914 : *Utsarga* (poems : dedicated to C. F. Andrews).

Gītimālya (songs).

Gītāli (songs : dedicated to Rathindranath Tagore & Pratima Devi).

Gān (songs).

1915 : *Kābyagrantha* (collected poems and dramas in ten volumes).

Galpa-Saptak (short stories).

1916 : *Chaturanga* (novel ; English translation : Broken Ties).

Phālguni (drama : dedicated to Dinendranath Tagore ; Eng. tr. *The Cycle of Spring*).

Ghare-Bāire (novel : dedicated to Pramatha Chaudhuri ; Eng. tr. *The Home and the World*).

Balākā (poems : dedicated to Willie Pearson).

Parichaya (essays).

Sanchaya (essays : dedicated to Brajendranath Seal).

1917 : *Kartār Ichhāy Karma* (a political lecture).

Gān (songs).

Dharma Sangit (songs).

Gītalekha (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

1918 : *Guru* (drama, adapted from *Achalāyatan*).

Gītalekha, II.

Palātaka (poems).

Gīta-Panchāsika (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

Anubād-Charchā (textbooks : passages for translation).

1919 : *Baitālik* (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

Gīti-bithikā (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

Ketakī (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

Japan Jātri (diary of travel to Japan : dedicated to Ramananda Chatterjee).

Sephāli (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

Kābya-Gīti (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

1920 : *Arup Ratan* (drama : adapted from *Raja*).

Gītalekhā, II (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

Paylā Nambar (short stories).

1921 : *Rin Śodh* (drama : adapted from *Śāradotsab*).

Śiśu Bholānāth (child poems).

Śikshār Milan (political essay).

Satyer Āhbān (pamphlet).

1922 : *Muktadhārā* (drama : partly based on *Prāyaschitta*. An English translation by the author, *The Waterfall*, appeared in the *Modern Review*, May 1922 ; another by Marjorie Sykes in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, February 1941).

Barṣamangal (songs).

Lipikā (prose sketches).

1923 : *Basanta* (musical drama for the Spring Festival ; dedicated to Kazi Nazrul Islam).

Naba-gītikā I & II (songs with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

1924 : *Basanta* (songs with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

1925 : *Māyār Khelā* (songs with notations by Indira Devi).

Purabi (poems, many of them composed during the author's South American Tour, dedicated to "Bijaya", Victoria Ocampo, his hostess in Argentina).

Sankalan (prose selections, edited by Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis).

Griha-prabeś (dramatised version of the story *Śesher Rātri*).

Prabāhinī (songs).

Desher Kāj (address at Sriniketan anniversary).

Barṣamangal (songs).

Śesh Barshan (songs).

Gīti-chārcha (a selection of songs, edited by Dinendranath Tagore).

1926 : *Achāryer Abhibhāsan* (address at Visva-Bharati Parishat, 1925).

Śodh-bodh (drama, based on the story, *Karma-phal*)

Rakta Karabi (drama : English translation : *Red Oleanders*).

Natir Puja (drama, based on the story, "Pujārini" in *Kathā Kāhinī*. English translation by the author in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, April 1927).

Ritu Utsab (a collection of plays on the Seasonal Festivals comprising *Śesh Barshan*, *Śāradotsab*, *Basanta*, *Sundara*, and *Phālguni*).

Sangit Gitānjali (a selection of songs in the Nagri script, with notations by Pandit Bhimrao Sastri).

Gītimālikā I (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

1927 : *Lekhan* (epigrammatic verses in Bengali, with their English translations, printed in facsimile of the Poet's writing, in Berlin).

Ritu-ranga (musical drama).

1928 : *Śesh Raksha* (prose drama : recast version of *Goḍāy Galad*).

Palli Prākṛti (address at Sriniketan anniversary).

Bālmiki Pratibhā (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

1929 : *Samavāyaniti* (address at Co-operative Conference).

Paritran (drama ; revised version of *Prāyaschitta*).

Jātri (diary of the Poet's tours in South America & Java).

Jogā-jog (novel).

Barṣāmangal (songs).

Śesher Kabitā (novel).

Tapati (prose drama ; based on *Rājā O Rāni*).

Mahuā (poems).

1930 : *Gītimālikā*, II (songs with notations by Dinendranath Tagore).

Bhānusiṃher Patrābali (selection of letters written between 1917-1923 ; dedicated to Mrs. B. N. Mukherjee).

1931 : *Nabin* (musical drama).

Pāṭha-Prachaya II, III, & IV (text-books for Schools).

Sahaj Pāṭh, I & II (lessons in Bengali for beginners, with verses ; illustrated by Kalabhavana artists).

Rāshiar Chithi (letters from Russia ; dedicated to Surendranath Kar).

Gītotsab (musical programme, with new songs).

Gītabitān I & II (collection of 1128 songs, arranged chronologically).

Banabāni (songs and poems, in praise of nature, including *Natarāja*, *Barṣamangal* and *Nabin*).

Sanchayitā (poetical selections, made by the Poet himself, with a preface).

Pratibhāsan (address at the 70th Birthday celebrations in Calcutta).

Śāpmochan (musical drama).

1932 : *Gītabitān* III (collection of 357 songs composed between 1923-31).

Pariśesh (poems ; dedicated to Atulprasad Sen).

Kāler Jātrā (two short dramas ; dedicated to Sarat Chandra Chatterjee).

Punaścha (prose poems; dedicated to "Nitu", Nitindranath Ganguly, the Poet's grandson).

1933 : *Dui bon* (novel).

Bisva-bidyālayer Rup (lectures delivered at the Calcutta University).

Śikshār Bikiran (lectures on education delivered at the Calcutta University).

Mānusher Dharma (Kamala lectures at the Calcutta University).

Chandālikā (drama ; English translation in *V. B. Quarterly*, N. S., Vol. III, Part III).

Tāsher Desh (drama based on the story *Ekti Āshāḍe Galpa* (1892). English translation in the *V. B. Q.*, N. S. Vol. IV, Part IV).

Bānsari (drama).

Bichitrita (31 poems with 31 pictures drawn by the author and other artists. Dedicated to Nandalal Bose on his 50th Birthday).

Bharat Pathik Rammohan (essays on Raja Rammohan Roy).

1934 : *Mālancha* (novel).

Śrāban Gāthā (songs of the rains).

Chār Adhyāya (novel).

1935 : *Śesh Saptak* (prose-poems).

Bīthikā (poems).

Svarabitān I (notations of 50 songs by Dinendranath Tagore).

Arup Ratan (revised edition).

1936 : *Śikshā Svāngikaran* (essay on education ; English translation, *Education Naturalised*).

Nritya-Nātya Chitrāngadā (musical version of the drama).

Nritya-Nātya Chitrāngadā Svaralipi (notations to the above by Sailajaranjan Mazumdar).

Pancha-bhut (revised edition).

Prāktanī (address to ex-students).

Patra-put (prose poems ; dedicated to his grand-daughter Nandita Devi and to Krishna Kripalani, on the occasion of their marriage).

Chhanda (essays on Bengali prosody ; dedicated to Dilip Kumar Roy).

Shyāmalī (prose poems ; dedicated to Sm. Rani Mahalanobis).

Sāhityer Pathe (essays on literature ; dedicated to Amiya Chandra Chakravarty).

Paschāttya Bhramaṇ (revised edition of *Yurop Prabāsir Patra* 1882, and *Yurop Jātrir Dāyary* 1893 ; dedicated to Charuchandra Dutt).

Bichitra Prabandha (revised edition).

Svarabitān II (50 songs with notations by Dinendranath Tagore and Anadi Dastidar).

Bānglā Sabdatattva (revised edition, dedicated Vidhushekhara Sastri).

1937 : *Khāpchhāḍā* (humorous poems : illustrated by the Author ; dedicated to Rajsekhar Bose).

Shey (fantastic stories : illustrated by the author : dedicated to Charuchandra Bhattacharya).

Jāpāne O Pārasye (an account of the Persian tour, with a reprint of *Jāpān-Jātri* : dedicated to Ramananda Chatterjee).

Kālāntar (socio-political essays).

Bisva-Parichaya (an introduction to science for Bengali readers ; dedicated to Satyendranath Bose).

Chhadār Chhabi (poems : illustrated by Nandalal Bose ; dedicated to "Bauma" Sm. Protima Tagore).

Prāntik (poems, written during the author's serious illness in 1937).

1938 : *Svarabitān* III (songs, with notations by Dinendranath Tagore ; edited by S. Mazumdar).

Pathè O Pather Prāntè (letters from abroad).

Senjuti (poems : dedicated to Sir Nilratan Sarkar).

Bānglā-bhāsā-pārichay (introduction to Bengali language ; dedicated to Sunitikumar Chatterjee).

Prahāsini (humorous poems).

Abhibhasan (pamphlet : address at the opening of Sriniketan Emporium in Calcutta).

Samāj (revised edition).

Gītabitān I (673 songs arranged subject-wise ; cf. 1931).

1939 : *Gītabitān* II (835 songs).

Nṛtyanātya Chandālikā (a musical drama, with notations by S. Mazumdar).

Ākāsh-pradīp (poems : dedicated to Sudhindranath Datta).

Nṛtyanātya Syāmā (musical drama based on *Parisodh* in *Kathā O Kāhinī* ; with notations by S. Mazumdar).

Pather Sanchaya (letters from Europe and America, 1912-13).

Abhibhāsan (pamphlet : address at the laying of the foundation stone of "Mahājāti Sadan" in Calcutta).

Rabindranāther Bāni (pamphlet : address at the opening of Vidyasagar Memorial Hall, Midnapur).

Prosād (pamphlet : two articles on Prasad Chatterji, an ex-student of Santiniketan).

Rabindra-rachanābali I, II (collected works).

Antardebatā (pamphlet : address at the Santiniketan Anniversary).

1940 : *Svarabitān* IV (songs, with notation by Kangalicharan Sen, edited by S. Mazumdar).

Nabajātak (poems).

Sānāi (poems)

Chitralipi (album of Drawings and Paintings, with autographed verses).

Chhele-belā (prose ; reminiscenes ; English tr. *My Boyhood Days*).

Tīn Sangi (three short stories).

Rogasajyaya (poems written during the recent serious illness).

Rabindra-rachanābali III—V.

Rabindra-rachanābali, Achalitā Samgraha, Vol, I (comprising books withdrawn and out of print for decades : *Kabi Kāhini*, *Bana-phul*, *Bhagna-hṛdaya*, *Rudrachanda*. *Kālmṛgaya*, *Bibidha Prasanga*, *Nalini*, *Saisab Sangīt*, and *Bālmiki Pratibhā*, 1st edition).

1941 : *Ārogya* (poems written during convalescence ; dedicated to Surendranath Kar).

Janmadinè (poems).

Galpa-salpa (short stories).

Sabhyatār Sankat (address delivered on 14 April at Santiniketan on the occasion of the Poet's 80th Birthday celebrations)

Rabindra-rachanābali VI, VII.

TAGORE'S ENGLISH BOOKS

1912 GITANJALI (Song-offerings) : Poems translated by the author from the original Bengali ; with an Introduction by W. B. Yeats and a pencil-sketch of the author by W. Rothenstein. Dedicated to W. Rothenstein. First Limited Edition issued by the India Society of London, 1912, October. First Published by Macmillan & Co.* 1913, March. 103 Poems : from *Gitānjali*, 51 pieces ; *Gītimālya*, 17 ; *Naibedya* 16, *Kheyā* 11 ; *Śiśu* 3 ; *Chaitālī*, *Smaran*, *Kalpanā*, *Utsarga*, *Achalāyatan*, each 1.

1913 THE GARDENER : Poems translated by the author. Dedicated to W. B. Yeats. There is no Bengali book of this name : the name has obviously been suggested by the first poem. Translated from *Kshanikā* 25, *Kalpanā* 16 ; *Sonār Tarī* 9 ; *Chaitālī* 6 ; *Utsarga* 6 ; *Chitrā* 5 ; *Mānasī* 3 ; *Māyār Khelā* 3 ; *Kheyā* 2 ; *Kaḍi O Komal*, *Gītalī* & *Sāradotsab* 1 each.

1913 THE CRESCENT MOON : Child-Poems. Translated by the author. With 8 illustrations in colour (by Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Asit Haldar, Surendranath Ganguly.) Dedicated to T. Sturge Moore. 40 poems : Most of the poems are from *Śiśu* ; *Kaḍi O Komal* 4 ; *Sonār Tarī*, *Gītimālya*, 1 each.

1913 CHITRA : a drama. Translated by the Author from *Chitrāngadā*, (1891). Dedicated to Mrs. W. Vaughan Moody. First published by the India Society of London.

1914 THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER : a drama. Translated by Kshitish Chandra Sen (I. C. S.) from *Rājā* (1910).

THE POST OFFICE : a drama. Translated by Devabrata Mukherji from *Dākghar* (1912) : with a preface by W. B. Yeats. First printed at the Cuala Press, Dundrum 1914. Macmillan & Co., 1914, March.

SADHANA : The Realisation of Life : Essays. Dedicated to Ernest Rhys. Lectures delivered at the Harvard University, U. S. A., in 1912-13.

ONE HUNDRED POEMS OF KABIR : Translated by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted by Evelyn Underhill, from the original Hindi text, as edited and rendered into Bengali by Pandit Kshitimohan Sen. With a long introduction by Evelyn Underhill. First Published by the India Society, London 1914. Macmillan & Co. 1915.

1915 THE MAHARANI OF ARAKAN : A Romantic comedy in one Act, adapted by George Calderon, from the Bengali short story *Daliya* by

* Except where the name of some other Publisher is given, the books which follow in the above list should be taken as Macmillan Publications.—Ed.

Rabindranath Tagore. Illustrated by Clarissa Miles. With a character sketch* of Rabindranath Tagore compiled by Kedarnath Das Gupta. Published by Francis Griffiths, London.

1916 FRUIT GATHERING : Poems translated from : *Gītāli*, 16 ; *Gītimālya* 15 ; *Balākā* 14 ; *Utsarga* 8 ; *Kathā* 6 ; *Kheyā* 5 ; *Smaran* 5 ; *Chitrā* 2 ; *Naibedya* 2 ; *Dharma Sangit* 3 ; *Kalpanā*, *Gitānjali*, *Rājā*, *Mānasi*, *Kaḍi O Komal*, *Achalāyatan*, 1 each.

HUNGRY STONES & OTHER STORIES : The Hungry Stones (*Kshudita Pāshān*, 1895) ; Victory (*Jaya-Parājaya*, 1892) ; Once there was a King (*Asambhava Kathā* 1893) ; Lord, the Baby (*Khokār Pratyābartana*, 1891) ; The Kingdom of Cards (*Ekti Āshāḍe Galpa* 1892) ; Devotee (*Boshtami*, 1914) ; Vision (*Drishtidāna*, 1898) ; Babus of Nayanjore (*Thākurda*, 1895) ; Living or Dead (*Jibita O Mrita*, 1892) ; We Crown thee King (*Rajtikā*, 1898) ; Renunciation (*Tyāga*, 1892) ; Kabuliwallah (*Kabuliwalah*, 1892).

STRAY BIRDS : Epigrams. the Macmillan Company, New York. Frontispiece in colour by Willy Pogany. Dedicated to T. Hara of Yokohama, Japan.

1917 MY REMINISCENCES : Translated by Surendranath Tagore from *Jīban Smriti*, 1912.

SACRIFICE & OTHER PLAYS : Sannyasi or The Ascetic (*Prakṛtir Pratishodh*, 1884) ; Malini (*Mālini*, 1896) ; Sacrifice (*Bisarjan*, 1890) ; The King and the Queen (*Rājā O Rāni*, 1889).

THE CYCLE OF SPRING : A drama. Translated from *Phālguni*, 1916.

Dedicated to the Boys of Santiniketan and to Dinendranath Tagore "who is guide of these boys in their festivals and treasure-house of all my songs."

PERSONALITY : Essays. Lectures delivered in America (1916). Dedicated to C. F. Andrews. Contents : 1. What is Art. 2. The World of Personality. 3. The Second Birth. 4. My School. 5. Meditation. 6. Women.

NATIONALISM : Essays. The Macmillan Co. N. Y. Lectures delivered in Japan and the U.S.A. Dedicated to C. F. Andrews.

1918 GITANJALI & FRUIT-GATHERING : Poems with illustrations by Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Kar, Abanindranath Tagore, Nabendranath Tagore. The Macmillan Company N. Y.

LOVER'S GIFT & CROSSING : Poems translated from : *Balākā*, 14 ; *Kshanikā*, 14 ; *Kheyā*, 10 ; *Gitānjali*, 8 ; *Gītimālya*, 8 ; *Naibedya*, *Utsarga*, 7 each ; *Chitrā*, 5 ; *Smaran*, *Gītāli*, *Chaitālī*, *Kalpanā*, 4 each ;

* By Ramananda Chatterjee, Annada K. Coomaraswamy, Rev. C. F. Andrews, W. B. Yeats.

Achalāyatan 3 ; *Mānasi, Prāyaschitta*, 2 each ; *Kaḍi O Komal, Kāhini* 1 each ; about 9 from *Dharma Sangit*.

MASHI & OTHER STORIES : Mashi (*Sesher Rātri*, 1914) ; The Skeleton (*Kankāl*, 1892) ; The Auspicious Vision (*Subhadṛshti*, 1900) ; The Supreme Night (*Eka Rātri*, 1892) ; Raja and Rani (*Sadar O Andar* 1900) ; The Trust Property (*Sampatti Samarpana*, 1891) ; The Riddle Solved (*Samasyā Puran*, 1893) ; The Elder Sister (*Didi*, 1895); Subha (*Subhā*, 1893) ; The Post Master (*Post Master*, 1891) ; The River-stairs (*Ghāter Kathā*, 1884) ; The Castaway (*Āpad*, 1895) ; Saved (*Uddhāra*, 1900) ; My Fair Neighbour (*Pratibeshini*, 1896).

1918 STORIES FROM TAGORE : The Macmillan Co. N. Y.

The Kabuliwallah (see *Hungry Stones*, etc.) ; The Home-coming (*Chhuti*, 1893) ; Once There Was a King (see *Hungry Stones*, etc.) ; Master Mashai (*Māster Mashai*, 1907) ; Subha (see *Mashi*, etc.) ; The Post Master (*Ibid*) ; The Castaway (*Ibid*) ; The Son of Rashmani (*Rashmanir Chhele*, 1911) ; The Babus of Nayanjor (see *Hungry Stones*, etc.).

1918 THE PARROT'S TRAINING : A Satire on educational methods. —Thacker, Spink & Co. Calcutta, 1918. Illustrations by Abanindranath Tagore. Translated from *Totākāhini*, 1918.

1919 THE CENTRE OF INDIAN CULTURE : Essay.—With vignettes by Nandalal Bose. Published by the Society for the Promotion of National Education, Adyar, Madras.

THE HOME AND THE WORLD : A Novel. Translated by Surendranath Tagore from *Ghare-Bāire* 1916.

1921 GREATER INDIA : Essays. Translated by Surendranath Tagore.—S. Ganesan, Madras.

• Contents : 1. Our Swadeshi Samaj (1904—05) 2. The Way to Get it Done (1905—06). 3. The One Nationalist Party (1908). 4. East and West in Greater India (1909—10).

THE WRECK : A Novel. Translated from *Naukā Dubi* (1906).

1921 THE FUGITIVE : Poems.—The Macmillan Company, N. Y. Dedicated to W. W. Pearson. Contents : The Fugitive (Poems from different books : *Lipikā*, about 20 ; *Mānasi, Sonār Tari, Chaitāli*, 7 each ; *Chitrā* 5 ; *Kshanikā, Kāhini, Palātakā*, 4 each ; *Utsarga, Balākā*, 3 each ; *Kaḍi O Komal, Smaran*, 2 each : *Kheyā, Gītimālya, Kathā* 1 each).

Kach and Devayani (from *Bidāya Abhisāp*, 1893) ; Ama and Vinayaka (from *Sati* 1897,); The Mother's Prayer (from *Gāndhārir Ābedan* 1897); Somaka and Ritvik (from *Narakbās*, 1897) ; Karna and Kunti (from *Karna Kunti Sambad*, 1900).

POEMS FROM TAGORE : With an Introduction by C. F. Andrews, Macmillan & Co. printed at Hare Press, Calcutta.

GLIMPSES OF BENGAL : Letters. Translated by Surendranath Tagore from *Chhinna Patra* (letters written during 1885—1895).

THOUGHT RELICS : The Macmillan Company N. Y. 1921. pp. 112. Thoughts selected from various writings already published.

1922 CREATIVE UNITY : Essays & Lectures. Dedicated to Dr. Edwin H. Lewis.

1924 LETTERS FROM ABROAD : Ganesan, Madras : Letters written principally to C. F. Andrews from Europe during the non-co-operation days of 1921—22. First appeared in *Modern Review*, 1922.

GORA : A Novel. Translated from *Gorā* by W. W. Pearson.

THE CURSE AT FAREWELL : A Drama. (Translation of *Bidāya-abhisāp* (1893) in verse by Prof. E. J. Thompson. (see above *The Fugitive*).

1925 POEMS : About 22 poems translated by E. J. Thompson in Benn's Sixpenny Augustus Books of Modern Poetry.

TALKS IN CHINA : Essays. Visva-Bharati Bookshop, 10 Cornwallis Street. Lectures delivered in China in April and May, 1924. Dedicated "To my friend Susima (Tse-mou-Hsu) to whose kind office I owe my introduction to the great people in China.". . . . Introduction by Liang Chi Chao, President, Universities Association, Peking.

RED OLEANDERS : A Drama. Translated from *Rakta-Karabi*.

BROKEN TIES & OTHER STORIES : Broken Ties (*Chaturanga*, 1916) ; Other Stories : In the Night (*Nisithe*, 1895) ; The Fugitive Gold (*Svarna Mriga*, 1892) ; Giribāla (*Megh O Raudra*) ; The Lost Jewels (*Manihārā*, 1898), Emancipation (from *Parishodh*—a poem).

1928 FIREFLIES : The Macmillan Co. N. Y. Decorated by Boris Artzybaschoff. The author's note : "*Fireflies* had their origin in China and Japan where thoughts were very often claimed from me in my handwriting on fans and pieces of silk."

LETTERS TO A FRIEND : Selected from letters written to C. F. Andrews. George Allen & Unwin. Edited with two Introductory Essays by C. F. Andrews. Dedicated to the memory of W. W. Pearson. Revised edition of *Letters from Abroad*, 1924 .

The BIRTHDAY BOOK : Selected from the English works of Rabindranath Tagore. Edited by C. F. Andrews. With 4 illustrations.

LECTURES AND ADDRESSES : Edited by Prof. Anthony X. Soares of Baroda College—Contents : 1. My Life, 2. My School, 3. Civilization and Progress, 4. Construction Vs. Creation, 5. What is Art, 6. Nationalism

in India, 7. International Relations, 8. The Voice of Humanity, 9. The Realisation of the Infinite.

1929 THOUGHTS FROM TAGORE : Edited by C. F. Andrews. With 4 Portraits.

1929 ON ORIENTAL CULTURE AND JAPAN'S MISSION : A Lecture delivered to the members of the Indo-Japanese Association, at the Industrial Club, Tokyo, May 15, 1929. Published by the Indo-Japanese Association, Tokyo, pp. 28.

1931 The CHILD : A Prose-poem : George Allen & Unwin 1931. Written directly in English. Later rendered into Bengali as *Śiśu-tirtha.* Retranslated into English from the Bengali by Bhabani Bhattacharya in *The Golden Boat*, 1932.

The RELIGION OF MAN : The Hibbert Lectures, 1930. George Allen & Unwin. Dedicated to Dorothy Elmhirst.

1932 The GOLDEN BOAT : Poems. Translated by Bhabani Bhattacharya. G. Allen & Unwin, pp. 121 (33 Poems from various works of Tagore).

MAHATMAJI AND THE DEPRESSED HUMANITY : Written during Gandhiji's fast in Yeravda Jail. Visva-Bharati. Dedicated to Acarya Piafulla Chandra Ray "in appreciation of his self-sacrifice for his country and his students."

1935 EAST AND WEST : Two open letters on international problems by Gilbert Murray and Rabindranath Tagore. An International Series of Open Letters. International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, Paris.

1936 EDUCATION NATURALIZED : English translation by Surendranath Tagore of a Lecture delivered under the auspices of the New Education Fellowship at the Senate Hall, Calcutta, February 1936. Printed at the Santiniketan Press.

1937 THE COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS of Rabindranath Tagore. The Macmillan Co. N. Y. pp. 537.

1940 MY BOYHOOD DAYS—Translation of *Chelebelā* by Marjorie Sykes. Visva-Bharati, 1941. First published in *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, 1940.

LIST OF TAGORE'S WRITINGS IN THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

OLD SERIES.

1923

Vol. I, I. VISVA-BHARATI.

*My nest-weary wings.**

A VISION OF INDIA'S HISTORY.

Tumultuous years bring their voice.

Vol. I, II. THE WAY TO UNITY.

This beggar's heart I cannot bear.

tr. Kshitish Chandra Sen, I.C.S.

A MASQUE OF EARTH AND MAN : BY ARTHUR GEDDES (includes six songs of Rabindranath).

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

With the song I am a song.

tr. Kshitish Chandra Sen.

Vol. I, III. THE INDO-IRANIANS.

Judgment.—*tr.* K. C. Sen.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

1924

Vol. I, IV. THE CAR OF TIME (drama : "Kāler Jātrā").

The Freedom of Neglect.

tr. K. C. Sen.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

W. W. Pearson.

Vol. II, I WHAT THEN ?

I've loved this world.

tr. K. C. Sen.

NOTES (includes address at the 1st anniversary of Sriniketan).

Vol. II, I. THE GUEST HOUSE OF INDIA (reply to the address given by the Saraswats, at Santa Cruz, near Bombay).

Vol. II, II. NOTES AND COMMENTS.

ASHUTOSH MUKHERJI (in memoriam).

RABINDRANATH TO CHINESE STUDENTS (report of his talk to Chinese students on arrival at Shanghai).

Special Number : RED OLEANDERS (drama : "Rakta Karabi". With illustrations by Gaganendranath Tagore).

Vol. II, III. CITY AND VILLAGE.

The Magnificence of Death.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND GOVERNOR YEN OF SHANSI, CHINA.

RABINDRANATH'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS BY THE STUDENTS OF TSING HUA COLLEGE (a report).

1925

Vol. II, IV. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (a lecture delivered in Japan).

When all my doors are open.

The Song Bird.

* Titles or first lines of POEMS will be in *italics*. ARTICLES, STORIES and DRAMAS will be in *roman*, the nature of the last two being indicated in brackets.—*Ed.*

NOTES (Some pages from the Poet's travel diary).

Vol. III, I. THE VOICE OF HUMANITY (an address at Milan, Italy).

To Italia.

The Skeleton.

NOTES AND COMMENTS (an address to the Indian Community in Japan).

RABINDRANATH'S FAREWELL TO MILAN.

THE SOUL OF THE EAST (an address to the Japanese passengers on board the S. S. *Suwa-Maru*).

Vol. III, II. THE INDIAN IDEAL OF MARRIAGE.

With a Grand Scheme in Mind.

The Cleanser (Satyendranath Dutt's 'Scavenger' (মেথর) in Rabindranath's translation).

NOTES AND COMMENTS (a discourse in South America on Christmas morning).

DESHBANDHU CHITTARANJAN DAS (a memorial note autographed).

THERE ARE SUFFERINGS, ETC. (a few lines on the significance of suffering).

RABINDRANATH'S LAST TOUR (a report of interview by the Free Press of India).

Vol. III, III. JUDGMENT.

Come my Lover.

RED OLEANDERS (author's interpretation of the drama).

1926

Vol. III, IV. THE PHILOSOPHY OF OUR PEOPLE (Presidential address at the Indian Philosophical Congress).

The Wreath of Victory.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Vol. IV, I. THE MEANING OF ART.

April.

The Message.

FAREWELL ADDRESS TO PROF. CARLO FORMICHI.

Vol. IV, II. THE RULE OF THE GIANT.

Take My Lute, Master.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Vol. IV, III. A POET'S SCHOOL.

Salutation.—tr. E. Thomson.

NOTES AND COMMENTS (from a letter to C. F. Andrews).

RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S INTERVIEW WITH SIGNORA SALVADORI.

1927

Vol. IV, IV. *Fire-flies.*

SWAMI SRADDHANANDA (translation of a memorial speech at Santiniketan).

Vol. V, I. THE DANCING GIRL'S WORSHIP (drama : "Natir Puja").

To Buddha on His Birthday (the original song also given in Devnagari and Bengali script).

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Vol. V, II. THE PRINCIPLE OF LITERATURE (from "Sāhityer Pathe").

Vol. V, II. NOTES AND COMMENTS (Presidential address on International Co-operators' Day, Calcutta).

SOME LETTERS (two letters in reply to J. T. Sunderland and Henry Barbusse).

LETTERS WRITTEN ON THE WAY TO JAVA (four letters, in translation).

Vol. V, III. *Some Poems.*

Rituranga (The Dance of the

Seasons : prologue to a musical play).

VISVA-BHARATI BULLETIN : OUR FOUNDER-PRESIDENT IN MALAYA (report of his tour and his talks).

1928

Vol. V, IV. LETTERS FROM JAVA.

Vol. VI, I. do

Vol. VI, II. do

BAUL SONGS (introduction to a collection of Baul songs).

Vol. VI, III. LETTERS FROM JAVA

Salutation to Aravinda—

tr. K. C. Sen.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

RAM MOHAN ROY (an address on the occasion of the Brahmo Centenary).

1929

Vol. VI, IV. LETTERS FROM JAVA.

Hè mòr Chitta.

tr. Indira Devi Choudhurani.

THE NEXT WORLD (report of a conversation with the Poet).

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

THE FUNCTION OF LIBRARY (address at the All India Library Conference).

Vol. VII, I & II. MESSAGE TO THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS, 1929.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LEISURE.

MESSAGE OF FAREWELL TO CANADA.

IDEAL OF EDUCATION (an address to the Concordia, Tokyo, 1929).

INDIA AND EUROPE (an interview given at Canada, May, 1929).

RABINDRANATH'S VISIT TO CANADA AND JAPAN (includes a long summary, by Canadian Press, of the Poet's lecture on "The Principles of Literature" ; his statement to a representative of *The Japan Adviser* at Tokyo on the 11th May, 1229 ; an interview at Honolulu ; an interview with a Chinese Delegation at Tokyo.)

A LETTER (to a European lady).

Vol. VII, III. *We are borne in the arms of the ageless light* (composed for the opening day celebrations of the Indian College, Montpellier, France).

FIVE ELEMENTS (introductory chapter to "Panchabhut") *tr.* Author.

GLEANINGS FROM LETTERS—*tr.*

1930

Vol. VII, IV. PRESIDENT'S TOUR IN CANADA (extracts from *Dalhousie Review*, July 29).

Vol. VIII, I & II. LETTERS FROM RUSSIA. *tr.* H. Sanyal.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN RUSSIA (includes report of interviews, replies to addresses of welcome, several talks and comments on Soviet activities).

Vol. VIII, III. INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL.

MEETING OF THE EAST AND WEST.

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE FROM THE POET (on the occasion of his seventieth birthday celebrations).

1931

Vol. VIII, IV. MESSAGE TO THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

THE FIRST AND LAST PROPHETS OF PERSIA.

THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF THE VISVA-BHARATI.

NEW SERIES

1935

Vol. I, I. *Where the mind is without fear* (autographed).

ART AND TRADITION.

The Kopai.

The Santal Woman.

THE FUNCTION OF LITERATURE (from "Sāhitya"—*tr.* Surendranath Tagore).

Vol. I, II. *And this is an endless wonder.*

Kalidasa.

THE CHANGING AGE ("Kālāntar")

My heart feels shy.

Vol. I, III. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

Farewell, My friend (concluding poem of "Shesher Kabita").

THE MATERIAL OF LITERATURE (from "Sāhitya"; *tr.* S. N. Tagore).

1936

Vol. I, IV. THE JUDGING OF LITERATURE(from "Sahitya" ; *tr.* S. N. Tagore).

In the spring time ("Bithika").

You ask me, mother ("Śiśu Bhōlānāth").

Vol. II, I. THE GREAT AND THE SMALL ("Chhoto O Boro"— *tr.* S.N. Tagore).

I cannot remember my mother.

THE SENSE OF BEAUTY (from "Sahitya"—*tr.* S. N. Tagore).

Vol. II, II. UNIVERSAL LITERATURE (from "Sahitya"—*tr.* S. N. Tagore).

Along Time's Chariot Path.

LAUGHTER (from "Panchabhut" *tr.* S. N. Tagore.)

Vol. II, III. THE PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE (from"Sāhityer Pathè" *tr.* S. N. Tagore).

SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY (from "Panchabhut"—*tr.* S. N. Tagore).

1937

Vol, II, IV. THE MEANING OF A POEM (from "Panchabhut"— *tr.* S. N. Tagore).

KACH AND DEBJANI (Dramatic Poem—*tr.* K. R. Kripalani).

JOURNEY IN PERSIA— *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

A Prayer.

Vol. III, I. ADDRESS AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS.

THE NEXUS OF BEAUTY (from "Panchabhut"—*tr.* S. N. Tagore).

CHINA AND INDIA (address at the opening of the Chinese Hall at Santiniketan, April 14, 1937).

To Africa.

The Gift—*tr.* K. C. Sen.

Vol. III, II. JOURNEY TO PERSIA.

Exchange of gifts.

SUBSTANCE AND FORM (from "Panchabhut"—*tr.* S. N. Tagore).

Vol. III,III. MAN AND WOMAN (from "Panchabhut"—*tr.* S. N. Tagore).

Awakening

MAHATMA GANDHI (A speech at Gandhiji's birthday celebrations, Santiniketan—*tr.* S. N. Tagore).

To the Painter.

1938

Vol. III, IV. A FANTASIA ON POETRY (from "Panchabhut"— *tr.* S. N. Tagore).

CHANDALIKA (drama— *tr.* K. R. Kripalani).

A LETTER.

Vol. IV, I. *Worshippers of Buddha.*

An Imprecation.

Visitation—tr. K. Roy.

Vol. IV, II. ON THE WAY TO JAPAN—*tr.* Indira Devi Chowdhurani.

Birthday—tr. K. Roy.

AN ADDRESS (to newly admitted students at Santiniketan).

Vol. IV, III. *Retribution.*

The Outcast—tr. K. Roy.

ON THE WAY TO JAPAN (*Cont.*)—*tr.* Indira Devi Chowdhurani.

POET TO POET (full text of correspondence between Yone Noguchi and the Poet on the Sino-Japanese conflict).

The Kanchan Tree.—tr. K. Roy.

SIR JAGADIS (Presidential address at the first death anniversary of J. C. Bose, Bose Institute, Calcutta, November 30, 1938).

1939

Vol. IV, IV. TASHER DESH or KINGDOM OF CARDS (drama). *tr.* K. R. Kripalani.

Vol. V, I. *Parisodh—tr.* K. Roy.

Jogu, the Gardener—tr. K. Roy.

Vol. V, II. STRAY THOUGHTS RECALLED.

SHESHER KABITA (Novel—*tr.* K. R. Kripalani and K. Roy).

Vol. V, III. *Desire for a Human Soul.*

ANTARDEVATA (a sermon at Santiniketan Mandir, Dec. 23, 1939—*tr.* A. Chakravarty).

1940

Vol. V, IV. SATYAM (a lecture in China, 1924 ; previously published).

Vol. VI, I. CHARLIE ANDREWS (an address at Santiniketan Mandir, in memory of C. F. Andrews, April 5, 1940—*tr.* M. Sykes.)

Two Poems.

Birthday—tr. K. Roy.

RURAL ENGLAND (extract from a letter, 1913—*tr.* A. Chakravarty).

Vol. VI. II. SAKUNTALA : Its Inner Meaning.

MY BOYHOOD DAYS ("Chhelebela"—*tr.* M. Sykes).

Vol. VI, III. *Atonement—tr.* K. Roy.

Four Poems (written during convalescence, 1940).

MY BOYHOOD DAYS (*Cont.*)

1941

Vol. VI, IV. *The Bird-Men—tr.* K. Roy.

CIVILISATION AND PROGRESS (from "Talks in China").

Indictment—tr. K. Roy.

Gandhi Maharaj—tr. the Author.

MUKTA-DHARA (drama—*tr.* M. Sykes).

LIST OF TAGORE'S WRITINGS IN THE *MODERN REVIEW* (1910-1941.)

1910

Feb. THE HUNGRY STONES (short story); *tr.* Pannalal Bose.

1911

Jan. THE POSTMASTER (short story); *tr.* Debendranath Mitra.

Feb. SAKUNTALA : its inner meaning; *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

Mar. The Future of India. *tr.* S. D. Varma.

*Janmakātha** (from "Śiśu"); *tr.* Ajitkumar Chakravarty and A. K. Coomaraswami.

Apr. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SIKH POWER; *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

Bidāy OR FAREWELL. (from "Śiśu") *tr.* Author & A. K. Coomaraswami.

May. *Fruitless Cry* ;— *tr.* Lokendranath Palit.

*THE IMPACT OF EUROPE ON INDIA *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

June. RAJA AND RANI (short story); *tr.* Keshabchandra Banerjee.

July. THE IMPACT OF EUROPE ON INDIA (contd.); *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

Aug. *The Death of a Star* ("Tārakār Ātmahatya") *tr.* L. Palit.

Sept. BEAUTY AND SELF-CONTROL; *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

My Father's House— *tr.* Maud McCarthy.

Nov. THE INNOCENT INJURED (short story); *tr.* Keshab Chandra Bannerjee.

Dec. VICTORIOUS IN DEFEAT (short story ("Jai Parājay"); *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

1912

Jan. THE CABULIWALLAH (short story); *tr.* Sister Nivedita.

Feb. *To the Ocean* ("Samudrer Prati"); *tr.* S. V. Mukherjee.

The far off ("Āmi Chanchala Hey"); *tr.* S. V. Mukherjee.

Mar. INDIA'S EPIC; *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

Apr. *Sparks from the Anvil* (epigrammatic verses).

June WOMAN'S LOT IN EAST & WEST; *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

THE SUPREME NIGHT (short story : "Ek Rātri"); *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

Sept. *The Infinite Love*— *tr.* by the Author.

The Small—*tr.* by the Author.

Youth—*tr.* by the Author.

Oct. THE RIVER STAIN (short story : "Ghāter Kathā"); *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

Nov. *Inutile*—*tr.* by the Author.

Dec. THE SPRING-HEAD OF INDIAN CIVILISATION; *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

ADAMANT (short story); *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

* Titles of Poems are in italics.

1913

Apr. RACE CONFLICT (address delivered at the Congress of the National Federation of Religious Liberals held at Rochester, New York).

June. COMMUNAL LIFE IN INDIA : *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

July. THE RELATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE INDIVIDUAL (address delivered in London).

Aug. MY INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN HISTORY ("Bharatbarsher Itihāsher Dhārā) ; *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

Sept. MY INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN HISTORY (cont.)

Oct. KALIDAS, THE MORALIST ; *tr.* Jadunath Sarkar.

Nov. *Poems—tr.* by the Author.

Dec. THE STAGE ("Rangamancha") ; *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

1914

Jan. EYESORE (novel, "Chokher Bāli") ; *tr.* S. N. Tagore. (Serialised : concluded in December issue).

Dec. *Poems.*

1915

Jan. *My Heart is on Fire* ("Tumi je surer Āgun").

Feb. *Santiniketan* (The School Song).

July. *A Peace Hymn from The Atharva Veda* (To Baroness B. Suttner) ; *tr.* Rabindranath Tagore.

Oct. *Unity in Diversity.*

1916

Jan. MY REMINISCENCES ("Jibansmriti" ; *tr.* S. N. Tagore. Serialised : concluded in the December issue).

Feb. *Ahalya* "Ahalyār Prati".

THE CYCLE OF SPRING (synoposis).

Apr. MASHI (short story) ; *tr.* W. W. Pearson.

INDIAN STUDENTS AND WESTERN TEACHERS.

A Prayer.

Oct. *The Song of the Defeated.*

1917

Jan. LETTERS ("Chhinna Patra" ; *tr.* S. N. Tagore. Serialised : concluded in the August issue).

May. GIRIBALA (short story : "Manbhanjan" ; *tr.* by the Author).

June. THE SPIRIT OF JAPAN.

THE LOST JEWELS (short story : "Manihara" ; *tr.* W. W. Pearson).

The Sunset of the century ("Satabdir Surya").

July. THE NATION.

A SHATTERED DREAM (short story "Durāshā" ; *tr.* C. F. ANDREWS, with the help of the author).

Aug. THE EDITOR (short story : "Sampādak" ; *tr.* W. W. Pearson, with the help of the author).

Sept. *The Day is come* ("Desha desha nandita kari").

THOU SHALT OBEY ("Kartār Ichhāy Karma") *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

Oct. THE MEDIUM OF EDUCATION ("Sikshār Bahan") *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

Nov. THE CONCLUSION (short story "Samapti" *tr.* C. F. Andrews).

Dec. THE SMALL AND THE GREAT ("Chhoto O Baḍo") *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

IN THE NIGHT (short story

"Nisithè") *tr.* W. W. Pearson, with the help of the author.

To India (from "Naibedya") *tr.* W. W. Pearson & E. E. Speight.

Song ("Mātri mandira punya angana") *tr.* Prof. Manomohan Ghose.

1918

Jan. *Four Poems* (Elusive ; Adventure ; Reckless ; Spring ;)

Autumn ("Āji hemanter santi") *tr.* W. W. Pearson

Freedom ("Mukta karo, mukta karo".)

AT HOME AND OUTSIDE (Novel : "Ghare-Bāire", later published by Macmillan & Co. as *The Home and the World.* Serialised : concluded in the December issue).

India's Prayer.

Feb. *Victory to thee, Builder of India's Destiny* (translation of the famous national song, *Jana gana mana* . . . by the Author).

March. *Despair not* ("Tor āpon jāne chhārbe tore").

THE PARROT'S TRAINING (allegorical satire on education).

Apr. *The Captain will come to his helm.*

Speak to me my friend of him.

June. *The Conqueror.*

THE MEETING OF THE EAST & THE WEST.

July. AT THE CROSS ROADS.

Sept. THE OBJECT AND SUBJECT OF A STORY) (In answer to the letter of a lady criticising "*Ghare-Bāire*" or "At Home and Outside")

Oct. *Hope.*

Nov. VERNACULAR FOR THE M. A. Degree (a letter).

1919

May. THE MESSAGE OF THE FOREST.

June. MOTHER'S PRAYER (dramatic poem "Gandhārir Ābedan").

July. LETTERS FROM AN ONLOOKER *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND (In reply to M. Rolland's letter).

Aug. TRIAL OF THE HORSE (allegorical satire).

Sept. THE RUNAWAY (short story). *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

Nov. AUTUMN-FESTIVAL (drama, "*Sarodotsab*").

1920

Jan. A LETTER ON AUROBINDO GHOSH (With reference to Jadunath Sarkar's review of *The Home & the World.*

Prayer.

Apr. KARNA AND KUNTI (dramatic poem).

June. TOWARDS THE FUTURE.

July. THE TRIAL (drama : "Lakhsmir Pariksha").

1921

Mar. ON CONSTRUCTIVE WORK (a letter).

Apr. OUR SWADESHI SAMAJ ; *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

A CRY FOR PEACE.

ON BRITISH MENTALITY IN RELATION TO INDIA (a letter).

May. THE WAY TO GET IT DONE. *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

LETTERS.

June. EAST AND WEST IN GREATER INDIA. *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

Aug. LETTERS.
Sept. EAST AND WEST.
LETTERS.
THE SONG.
Oct. THE HIDDEN TREASURE (short story) tr. W. W. Pearson.
LETTERS FROM ABROAD.
THE CALL OF TRUTH
Nov. THE UNION OF CULTURES.
LETTERS FROM ABROAD.
Dec. THE MODERN AGE.
LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

1922

Jan. LETTER FROM THE ATLANTIC.
LETTERS FROM ABROAD.
Feb. A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS (short novel : "Chaturanga").
LETTERS FROM ABROAD.
Mar. A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS (Contd).
Apr. A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS (Contd).
Pilgrim (from "Balākā").
May. A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. (Contd).
THE WATERFALL (drama, "Muktadhārā").
June. LETTERS FROM ABROAD.
July. LETTERS FROM ABROAD. (Includes translation of a poem "Woman').
Aug. LETTERS FROM ABROAD.
Sept. *Picture* (from Balākā). *tr.* K. C. Sen.
Nov. *I have loved this world's face* (from Balākā). *Tr.* K. C. Sen.
LETTERS FROM ABROAD.
Dec. *My Songs they are like moss* (from "Balākā"). *tr.* K. C. Sen.
LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

1923

Jan. to Dec : GORA (novel). *Tr.* W. W. Pearson.

1924

Jan. THE PROBLEM.
Feb. THE CAR OF TIME (A drama in one act reproduced from the *V. B. Quarterly*).
Aug. THE FOURFOLD WAY OF INDIA.
Oct. THE SCHOOLMASTER.

1925

Jan. TO THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN.
Mar. *Tempest.*
Apr. THE PLACE OF SCIENCE (Farewell Lecture at Japan).
May. TRUTH.
TO THE CHILD. (Spoken at Kyoto Girl's College).
MY SCHOOL (Lecture in Japan).
THE DEATH TRAFFIC (the original Bengali written in 1881).
June. GETTING & NOT GETTING (Translated by the Author from paragraphs written by him while on his voyage to the West).
July. LETTERS TO A FRIEND (To C. F. Andrews).
Aug. LETTERS TO A FRIEND (To C. F. Andrews).
Sept. LETTERS TO A FRIEND (To C. F. Andrews & W. W. Pearson).
THE CULT OF THE CHARKA.
Dec. STRIVING FOR SWARAJ.

1926

Jan. TO ROMAIN ROLLAND.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF OUR PEOPLE (Presidential Address at the Indian Philosophical Congress).

Feb. RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND KNIGHTHOOD.

1927

Mar. THE SUDRA HABIT.
Apr. *On the Birthday of Buddha.*
July. *Spring that in my Courtyard.* (From "Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry" ed. Gwendoline Goodwin).
Oct. *To Java* (Batavia, 1927).
Nov. *To Siam* (Bangkok, 1927).

1928

Feb. *Siam.*
May. THE SARASWATI PUJA IN THE CITY COLLEGE HOSTEL.
July. THE PATRIOT (short story).
tr. by the Author.
AUROBINDO GHOSH.
Sep. RAM MOHAN ROY.
Oct. MESSAGE TO THE WORLD LEAGUE FOR PEACE.
Dec. EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA.

1929

Feb. MESSAGE TO THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS.
ADDRESS TO THE SIKH COMMUNITY IN CANADA. (Reported from memory by C. F. Andrews).
Aug. *A Weary Pilgrim* (a poem composed on the Pacific Ocean for Asahi Shimbun dated S. S. Taiyo Maru, May 3, 1929).
INTERVIEW TO THE NEWSPAPERMEN AT SAN FRANCISCO).
Dec. *I know my days will end*—
tr. Indira Devi Chaudhurani.
A Prayer.
tr. Indira Devi Chaudhurani.
ON TAKING OATH OF LOYALTY (letter written to Charles Andrews).

1930

Jan. ORGANISATIONS.
Feb. WEALTH & WELFARE.
Dec. MY PICTURES.

1931

Jan. MY SCHOOL (Interview at Moscow).
Feb. *Vision of life and love.*
Mar. WILL DURANT'S "The Case for India" (review).
May. VOICELESS INDIA. (a review of Gertrude Emerson's book "Voiceless India").
June. MY EDUCATIONAL MISSION.
The Toy Citadel—
tr. Nagendranath Gupta.
July. *Princely Pride*—
tr. Nagendranath Gupta.
Sept. THE SOVIET SYSTEM.
Nov. ADDRESS (to the All Bengal Muslim Students conference).
To Gautama Buddha
(written in view of the Mulagandhakuti Vihar, Sarnath).

1932

Jan. *Poems* (14 poems).
MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI (translated from the Poet's Bengali speech at Santiniketan on Gandhiji's last birthday).
Feb. *Questions.*
June. *To Kalidasa*—
tr. Nagendranath Gupta.
July. ART (Address at the reception by the Literary Society of Tehran, May 1, 1932).
Oct. TO PERSIA.
Dec. RURAL WELFARE METHODS (Comments on "Review of Rural

Welfare Activities in India, 1932" by C. F. Strickland).

1933

Jan. The Victim.

"REBEL INDIA" (review of "Rebel India" by H. N. Brailsford).

Mar. RAM MOHAN ROY (Presidential Address at the Ram Mohan Roy Centenary inaugural meeting, February 18, 1933).

June. TAGORE TO GANDHI (Two letters to Mahatma Gandhi).

Dec. THE WORKING OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS (an interview between the Poet and Prof. Zimmern).

ASIAN CULTURAL RAPPROCHEMENT (written on 2. 12. 32 with reference to a resolution passed by the Hindu Mahasabha).

1934

June. ON RUSSIA.
tr. Dr. Sasadhar Sinha.

Aug. SUPREME MAN (Readership Lecture at Andhra University.

Breezy April, Vagrant April.

Sept. "I AM HE". (Readership Lecture at Andhra University, 10. 12. 1933).

MORAL WARFARE. (Message to the Society of Friends, Ireland).

1935

Jan. Poems.

June. QUESTION.
tr. by Hrishikesh Bhattacharya.

July. Today I gain you truly.

Aug. THE CAR-FESTIVAL.
tr. by Hrishikesh Bhattacharya.

1936

Apr. A Person. tr. by the Author.

June. Why Deprive me of My Fate.

A POET'S BIOGRAPHY.

Aug. THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM (short story).

COMMUNAL DECISION. (Presidental Address at a Calcutta Conference, 15. 7. 36).

Sept. OUTCAST (short story).
tr. S. N. Tagore.

Oct. FALSE HOPES (short story).
tr. S. N. Tagore.

Dec. THE WAYFARING WOMAN (short story) *tr.* S. N. Tagore.

1937

Jan. THE LOST JEWEL (short story)
tr. S. N. Tagore.

Feb. Poems : (i) *Morning*, (ii) *The Night Lamp—tr.* Lalit Mohan Chatterjee.

Apr. RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT AND SECTARIANISM (Address at Sri Ram-Krishna Centenary Parliament of Religions).

THE MUSIC OF THE WINGS.
tr. Arabinda Bose.

May. CHINA AND INDIA. (Address at the opening of Cheena-Bhavana at Santiniketan.

June. Birthday.

Sept. INSULT TO MAN'S HUMANITY, AND PENAL EXCESS (Address at Santiniketan on Andamans Day).
tr. Amiya Chakravarty.

Dec. JAGADISH CHANDRA BOSE.

1938

Jan. JAGADISH CHANDRA BOSE (Talk to students at Santiniketan.
tr. S. N. Tagore).

June. A LETTER TO AN INDIAN FRIEND IN JAPAN (A. M. Sahay).

Oct. LETTER TO NOGUCHI.

Nov. LETTER TO NOGUCHI.
Dec. JAGADISH CHANDRA BOSE AND HIS INSTITUTE.

1939

July. DIFFUSION OF EDUCATION.
tr. Amal Krishna Mukherjee.
THE CONGRESS (letter to Dr. Amiya Chakravarty).
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BENGALI

TITLE		AUTHOR
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Chhele-belā	...	,,
Kabya Parikramā	...	Ajit Kumar Chakravarty
Rabindranath	...	,,
Rabiyānā	...	Amarendranath Roy
Rabindranath	...	Anil Chandra Ghosh
Jiban-Shilpi	...	Annada Shankar Roy
Rabindrasāhitye Bhārator Bāni	...	Benoy Kumar Sarkar
Jāti Gathané Rabindranath	...	Bharat Chandra Majumdar
Raktakarabir Marmakathā	...	Bholanath Sen Gupta
Realist Rabindranath	...	Bijoylal Chattopadhyay
Bidrohi Rabindranath	...	,,
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Kabindra Rabindranather Ādarsha	...	Jogesh Chandra Burman Roy
Mānush Rabindranath	...	Kanan Bihari Mukhopadhyay
Rabindrakābya Pāth	...	Kazi Abdul Wadud
Gitānjalir Bhābdhārā	...	Krishna Bihari Sen
Samasāmayik Kabir Chokhe Rabindranath		Jatin Bagchi and others

* This bibliography does not claim to be exhaustive. We have mentioned only such books as were within our reach in the Santiniketan Library. The readers will oblige us by drawing our notice to books not included in the above lists.—*Ed.*

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Rabindra Pratibhā	...	Maulavi Ekramuddin
Rabindranather Kābya	...	Nandalal Bhattacharya
Rabindrasāhityer Bhumikā	...	Niharranjan Roy
Rabindrajibani (Vols. I & II)	...	Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay
Rabindragranthapanji	...	,,
Rabindra Barshapanji	...	,,
Rabindrakābyaprabāha	...	Pramathanath Bishi
Rabindranath	...	Priyalal Das
Jayanti Utsarga	...	*Rabindra Parichaya Sabhā*
Kabi Prasasti	...	*Rabindra Jayanti Chhātra Chhātri Utsav Parishad*
Kabi Parichiti	...	*Rabindra Parishad*
Kabir Swapna	...	Radhacharan Das
Rabindra Sāhityer Parichaya	...	Sachin Sen
Rabindra Sādhanā	...	Shibkrishna Datta
Rabindranath	...	Subodh Chandra Sen Gupta
Rabidipitā	...	Surendranath Dasgupta
Sarbahārār Dristité Russiar Chithi	...	Swadeshranjan Das
Gitānjalir Samālochanā	...	Upendra Kumar Kar

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Tagore and his Philosophy—Feng Fei.

WHO'S WHO AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS

RAMANANDA CHATTERJI, M.A.—the doyen of Indian journalists ; Founder and Editor of the *Modern Review* and *Prabasi* ; has presided over several all-India conferences.

HIRENDRANATH DATTA, M. A., B. L., P. R. S.—Vice-President, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, the premier literary association of Bengal ; Vice-President, National Council of Education ; Vice-President, Visva-Bharati ; Vice-President, International Theosophical Society ; well-known author of several books mostly in Bengali, dealing with the Upanishads, the Vedanta, the Gita, etc. ; delivered Kamala Lectures of Calcutta University for 1940.

Dr. J. H. COUSINS (Kulapati Jayaram)—author of many books on art, philosophy, and education ; along with AE and Yeats, initiated the well-known Irish literary movement. Settled in South India since 1915 ; now art-adviser to the government of Travancore ; was a visiting professor at Santiniketan for some time.

CHEN LI-FU—Minister of Education, National Government of China ; well-known poet and scholar in Chinese.

DHURJATIPRASAD MUKERJI, M. A.—Lecturer in Economics and Sociology, Lucknow University ; author of several books in English on Sociology and Economics ; critic and novelist of repute, connoisseur of classical Indian music ; closely connected with artistic and literary movements of the country ; published two books on Tagore's Music.

INDIRA DEVI CHAUDHURANI, B. A.,—wife of Pramathanath Chaudhury and daughter of Satyendranath Tagore ; well-known Bengali writer ; a distinguished connoisseur of Indian music.

Dr. S. K. MAITRA, M. A., Ph. D.—Head of the Department of Philosophy and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Benares Hindu University.

ANNADASANKAR RAY, I.C.S.—author of a six-volume novel in Bengali entitled *Satyāsatya* ; has published several volumes of prose and verse.

Dr. AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY, M.A., D. Phil. (Oxon.)—literary secretary to Rabindranath Tagore and professor of English at Visva-Bharati from 1926 to 1933. Appointed Senior Research Fellow at Brasenose College, Oxford, 1937 to 1940. Joined English Department, Calcutta University, 1941. Published a book on *Dynasts and Post-war English Poetry*.

Dr. RADHAKAMAL MUKHERJI, M. A., Ph. D.—Head of the Department of Economics and Sociology, Lucknow University; author of numerous publications in the two subjects on which he is an authority; co-operating editor of "International Journal of Sociology and Social Research"; member of L'Institut International de Sociologie.

BUDDHADEVA BOSE, M. A.—well-known author in Bengali; works include poetry, criticism, short stories, novels, essays, etc.; active participant in new movements in Bengali Literature. Founder and Editor of *Kavitā*, a review devoted entirely to poetry and literature.

Dr. P. GUHA THAKURTA, M. A. (Harvard), Ph. D. (Lond.)—author of *Bengali Drama*; *Modern Biography*; and several other books both in English and Bengali. Some time reader in English, Lucknow University and Asst. Editor, Hindustan Times, Delhi; now publicity officer, Indian Tea-market Expansion Board.

PRAMATHANATH CHAUDHURY, Bar-at-law—novelist, story-writer and essayist of repute; Founder and Editor of *Sabuj Patra*, which did much to modernise the form and spirit of Bengali language and literature, and to which Rabindranath Tagore was a regular contributor.

Dr. STELLA KRAMRISCH, Ph. D.—For some time Lecturer in Art, Visva-Bharati; at present Lecturer in Indian Art, Calcutta University; Lecturer Courtauld Institute, University of London; author of *Indian Sculpture*; *A survey of Painting in the Deccan*; *Principles of Indian Art*, etc. Editor of the *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*.

LIN SHEN—President of the Chinese Republic.

Dr. SRIKUMAR BANERJI, M. A., Ph. D. (Cal.)—Professor of English, Presidency College, Calcutta; sometime Principal, Rajshahi College; author of *Wordsworth's Theory of Poetic Diction*; has published a History of the Bengali Novel in Bengali.

TAI CHI-TAO—President of the Examination Yuan, National Government of China: close collaborator of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen; exponent of Kuomintang philosophy; eminent Buddhist scholar.

DEWAN CHAND SHARMA, M.A.—Head of the Department of English, D. A. V. College, Lahore; published several books including, *The Prophets of the East*; *Ideals and Reality*, etc.

NALINIKANTO GUPTA—disciple of Sri Aurobindo, inmate of the Pondicherry Asrama since 1910; scholar, litterateur, critic and poet; exponent of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy; published several works in English and Bengali, including *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*.

HUMAYUN KABIR, M. A. (Oxon.)—was secretary and librarian, Oxford Union Society; actively interested in Indian politics; one of the

organisers of peasant movement in Bengal ; Member, Bengal Legislature ; Lecturer, Calcutta University ; published books of verse in Bengali and a treatise on *Kant and Aesthetics* : editor, *Chaturanga*, a Bengali quarterly.

PRABODH CHANDRA SEN, M. A.—Senior professor of History and Bengali, Daulatpur College ; authority on scientific study of Bengali metrics ; edited Kalidasa's *Meghadutam* : published papers on Rabindranath's contribution to Bengali metrics.

MAHAMAHOPADHYAY PANDIT VIDHUSHEKHAR SASTRI—for many years Head of the Research Department, Visva-Bharati ; published many learned works on Vedic subjects and on Tibetan Buddhism. Now Asutosh Professor of Sanskrit, University of Calcutta.

Dr. K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR, M. A., D. Litt. (Madras)—Professor of English, Lingaraj College, Belgaum ; publications include *Lytton Strachey : a critical study* ; *A Hand-book of Indian Administration*, etc.

SACHIN SEN—Asst. Secretary, British Indian Association, Calcutta : was secretary to the Hon'ble Sir Provas Chandra Mitter, K. C. S. I., during the Second Round Table Conference in London. Works include *The political Philosophy of Rabindranath* and *Rabindra-Sāhityer Parichay*.

Dr. S. N. DASGUPTA, M. A., Ph. D., C. I. E.—Principal, Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta ; sometime lecturer in Cambridge University ; represented India at different sessions of International Congress of Philosophy and also International Congress of Faiths. Author of several books on Indian Philosophy and a Treatise on Rabindranath Tagore's Poetry.

GURDIAL MALLIK, B. A.—Lecturer in English, Visva-Bharati ; scholar and writer of great insight on religious mysticism.

KSHITIMOHAN SEN SASTRI, M. A.,—Head of the Research Department, Visva-Bharati ; recognised authority on mediaeval mysticism ; published several works on mediaeval saints.

EZRA POUND—Leader of the American Imagist School of Poetry. Author of several books of verse, most notable being the *Cantos*.

EVELYN UNDERHILL—Well-known authority on mysticism. Has published many books on the subject including *Mysticism : A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*. Co-translator with Rabindranath Tagore of *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*.

PROBHAT KUMAR MUKHERJEE—Librarian of Visva-Bharati and Lecturer in History. Author of a two-volume biography in Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore : has recently edited an Encyclopaedia of Knowledge for boys in Bengali.